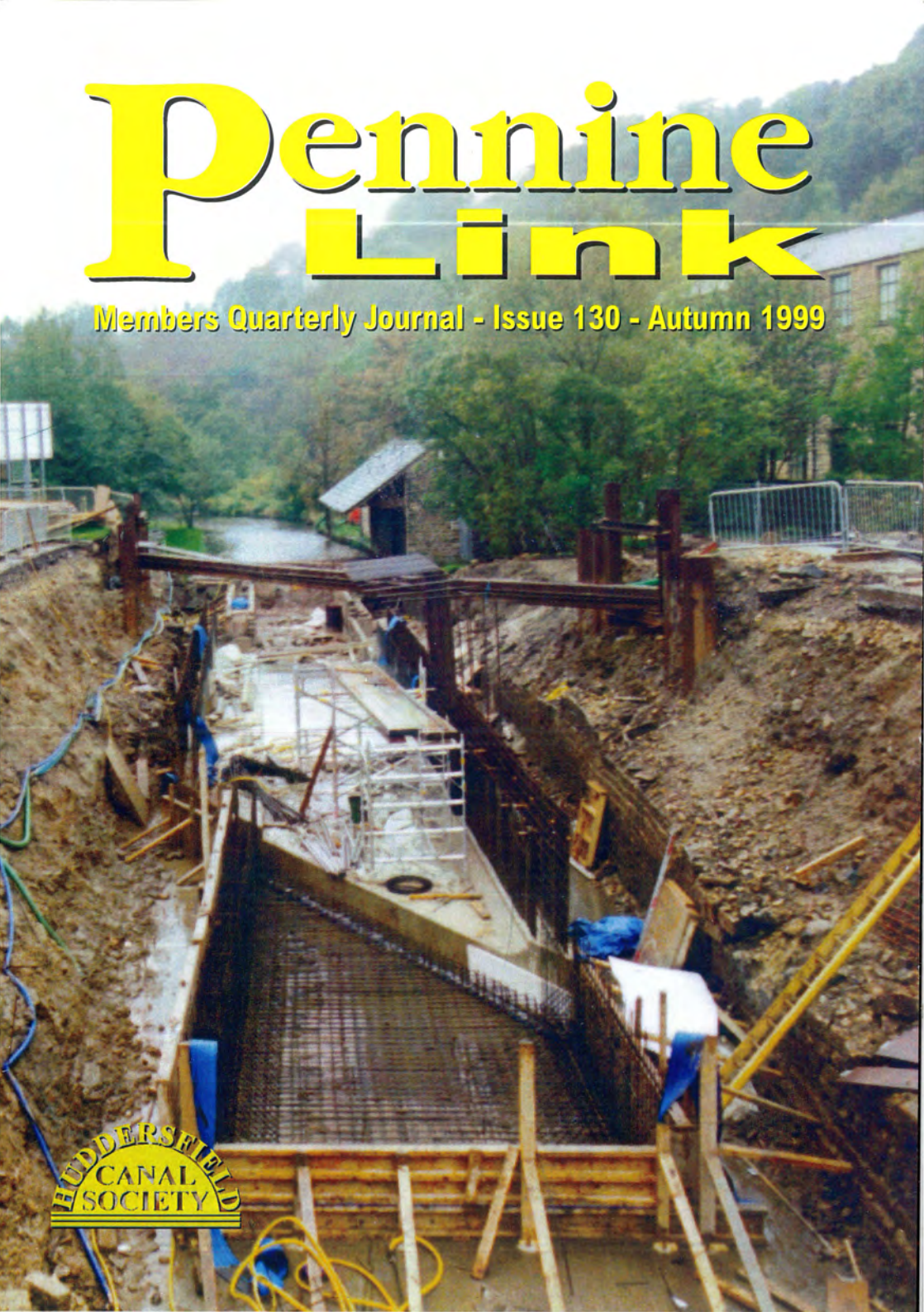


# Pennine Link

Members Quarterly Journal - Issue 130 - Autumn 1999



HUDDERSFIELD  
CANAL  
SOCIETY

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Cover: Work definitely in progress at Wood Road, Uppermill! The main road has been entirely excavated to reveal the original canal. The road and wall to the left follow the line of the historic road (before road widening) with the original canal bridge still intact. This will become an HGV turning circle when the main road is reinstated over a new box section culvert. The Transhipment Warehouse is seen in the distance. Photo: R.Cough



Since the last issue some of our staff and work force have moved on. Paula McLoughlin now works for British Airways in Manchester, Andy

Sharp, the mason, is working with S & J Whitehead, one of the country's leading masonry firms, and Jimmy Wood and Trevor Wilkinson are with British Waterways. Chris Sharp has left us for pastures unknown. As for the rest, for all five of them - including the three office staff - the future remains uncertain.

And I have to apologise yet again for Plink 129 being late! This time it was a combination of annual holidays at the printers and continuing computer bugs. I refuse to hazard a guess as to when you will be reading this. I only stand back in admiration at the people who produce glossy monthlies with full colour on every page - and get them out on time!

This issue sees a great proliferation of leaflets and questionnaires about canals in general and ours in particular.

Oldham Council went into earnest consultation about the way to tackle High Street/Wade Lock work at Uppermill - and a surprising number of respondents voted for the option of a two-way bridge that was rejected before consultation took place. Heaven help Oldham Council now if the delay at the one-way signals is more than 90 seconds!

Kirklees Council came up with a questionnaire about the effect of the Standedge

Experience on Marsden with three general questions on the experience. Visitors to the consultation exhibition from outside Marsden must have been as confused as we were, thinking the questions were aimed at potential visitors from a wide catchment area. Perhaps we will all have a chance to comment objectively in due course.

A really glossy publication from British Waterways gives the public a chance to communicate with BW at any time by telephone, web site, E-mail, pigeon post, fax or personally with members of staff. The main topic for discussion is "Partnership with the People", introducing the Membership Scheme and the associated Charitable Trust. Something like the National Trust, we gather, but without free entry to anything. Tentative offers are

- a handbook
- a newsletter
- discounts and special offers on waterway-related products and services
- an events programme
- an education programme
- a volunteer programme
- the chance to nominate a member to the Board of British Waterways.

And, in filling in the questionnaire, if you happen to be a canal enthusiast or restoration worker, you will tick "other" after boaters, anglers, walkers, hirers, cyclists and 3 other categories!

Call 01923 20 11 15 for further information and ask for Dave. That's Dave Fletcher, the Chief Executive, by the way.

And the same 'phone number appears on an attractive little sticker plonked on current mail from BW. Without a doubt, they are trying.

On the communication front the Canal Company, in consultation with the other partners, has developed a "media relations protocol" which tells members of the partnership how to deal with the media, on a variety of topics, without treading on anyone else's toes. It has been proved necessary and is a classic illustration of the potential difficulties in making our six-sided partnership work. Pennine Link will steer well clear!

You will not be surprised to learn that, yet again, a major boat hirer is offering £100 off a week's hire - and this time, apparently, to anyone who asks for a brochure, not only former customers. Waterways World magazine accepts that the hire business is in the doldrums. We've said it before, we'll say it again - **LOWER YOUR HIRE RATES AND PRODUCE MORE BUDGET QUALITY BOATS!**

And a suggestion about the stone-throwing mentioned last time which has raised a few angry comments.

"Surely everybody now knows the benefits of carrying a camera - amazing how the little s\*\*s don't like having their photo taken. Even one of the single use cameras would be an enormous benefit and might even help to get the s\*\*s prosecuted."

Very true - my nephew has an intercom 'phone at the helm for talking down his 70 foot boat and picking that up when trouble is around has a salutary effect.

Ken Wright.

# Chairman's Report

When I first observed and analysed the problems on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal following the historic 'green' report on the Canal published by the Society in 1975, three features stood out. I suppose because I lived in the Tame Valley, the problems assumed more importance to me.



Stalybridge, Standedge Tunnel and Wool Road intrigued me. First - the Wool Road culvert. Adjacent to, as yet, an unrestored transshipment shed, this blockage restored would link a honeypot area - Uppermill - to the second problem and opportunity, Standedge Tunnel. Thirdly, Stalybridge with its seemingly intractable problem provided the biggest challenge.

The 1975 report makes an interesting commentary on the Stalybridge blockage but dismisses the other two problems in a few lines. I quote "As in Huddersfield, many buildings in this area of Stalybridge are nearing the end of their useful life and will be demolished over the course of the next ten years. This provides an exciting opportunity for the local planners to create an entirely new water park and water centre in the very heart of the town - a feature which could provide a leisure outlet and an amenity feature in an area which is at present sadly lacking in both, whilst simultaneously reconnecting the two severed lengths of canal." The Report gave an alternative ie. river navigation, which until the Millennium Bid was the only option supported by Tameside MBC.

Last month work began in Stalybridge. CTP/St James, the developer of the Delta Works, buried a time capsule in the site. It was temporarily placed in the old canal

line. More significantly, the culvert through the site was closed and the work commenced to re-excavate the old canal.

I recall visiting the managing director of Millwood Rubber Co. prior to the erection of a new building over the canal near Mottram Road, to persuade him

to locate it elsewhere. It was in vain; planning permission was granted.

We concentrated on the river route.

To witness civic dignitaries welcoming the new development in Stalybridge and the prophetic fulfilment of the 1975 survey and feasibility study was very rewarding.

**Standedge Tunnel.** At a visit to the Canal by the Canal Company last month, we witnessed progress on the Tunnel restoration - nearly two hundred metres from the Tunnel mouth at Diggle. The contractors, AMCO, have established a compound off Ward Lane, above Lock 32W, behind the signal box. Here, a large, German built centrifuge is assisting in the dredging of the Tunnel. Silt is mixed with water in the Tunnel and pumped into the machine, at present some seven hundred metres from the working face. We were informed that the whole five thousand metres will be dredged this way. This process separates the pumped solution into a reasonably dry and contaminated solid and an amazingly clear water which is returned to the Canal. Tipping costs are thereby reduced and despite an incredible hire cost for this machine, the Tunnel will be dredged in a most cost effective manner. The effect on the environment will also be beneficial. Future articles on the Tunnel restoration will appear in our magazine with technical details.

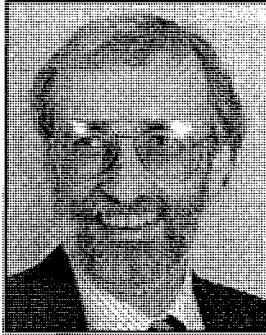
*cont'd ...*



# A Partnership with the People?

The government has invited British Waterways to involve a wider range of people in the waterways and develop closer links with users. British Waterways are, therefore, carrying out a consultation exercise on proposals for a membership scheme and a separate Waterways Trust. They appreciate that without the work of volunteers there would be no substantial waterway system left, and want to extend the opportunities for involvement to everyone, especially those who care about the environment and our heritage.

It is proposed to establish a Membership scheme, as a parallel to that operated by English Heritage. British Waterways believe this could enhance their performance, increase their accountability, and provide increased support for and involvement in



the waterways.

The scheme would be focussed on three themes:

## 1. Waterway Leisure & Education

British Waterways would like to develop flagship sites such as the Anderton Boat Lift, or the Foxton Inclined Plane (the site, or rebuilt?) and smaller scale

Visitor Centres & tea rooms, possibly based on waterway offices. They want to improve towpaths for long distance walking and, where safe, cycling and to provide access for the disabled. They would like to have a living history theatre programme and more open day events. They want to involve different ethnic groups. They want to open canalside "bunkbarns" & hostels, and develop floating classrooms in historic boats.

*cont'd ...*

**Wool Road.** Anyone travelling from Saddleworth to Marsden will notice the works on the A670, but be quick. Progress is astonishing. The contractors, DCT Civil Engineering Ltd, have uncovered the old canal bridge which is intact and close to Lock 24W. The section of infilled canal between the end of the Transhipment Shed and this bridge has been re-excavated, partially realigned and construction of the concrete 'tunnel' is underway. One no longer needs to understand plans and drawings to grasp the project - it is evident from observing the works.

So three major schemes are well under way and the impossible dream is becoming reality. Meanwhile, the Society has won the Tom Rolt Award for Pennine Link. This time solely. Well done Ken, and your

team, and to everyone who contributes articles, photographs etc.

With restoration assured, and we are on target for April 2001, the Society looks to its future and the future operation and management of the Canal. More about reorganisation in the next Issue. Suffice to report we are in talks with BW's Derek Cochrane to explore the long term relationships with the local authorities and British Waterways. The vehicle for the whole restoration project and its organisation is unique in the UK. Together we pioneered the scheme. Together we will create a working framework to involve all the partners in the operation and maintenance of our Canal. I look forward to detailing the proposals in future issues of our journal.

David Sumner

## 2. A Living Heritage Network

British Waterways would like to restore the character of individual waterways and see further derelict waterways and historic boats restored. They want to carry out archaeological investigations and preserve waterway traditions and crafts. They want to provide a programme of lectures & seminars and develop "Heritage Detective" competitions. They would like to produce schemes for the adoption of bridges, locks, canalside cottages etc to secure long term maintenance. They want to strengthen links with European waterways and give awards for good practice in architecture and design.

## 3. Waterway wildlife

British Waterways want to develop projects to create wildlife reserves, and protect creatures at risk such as water voles. They want to survey canal habitats. They would like to use traditional methods to maintain and restore towpath hedges and create a nursery for indigenous tree species. They suggest people could adopt a length of canal or act as a warden.

The Membership scheme would be open to individual or family members.

Organisations such as HCS could be affiliated and companies could be corporate members. Benefits of subscriptions could include a handbook, newsletters, discounts on waterway related products and services, special offers for anglers, boaters and cyclists, an events programme, an education programme and a volunteer programme. If sufficient members are attracted the membership may be able to nominate a member to the Board of British Waterways.

A subscription level similar to organisation such as the National Trust, English Heritage, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, or the Ramblers Association is suggested. Those quoted by British Waterways vary between £18 and £29 for individual members and £22-50 and £56 for family membership.

British Waterways then propose to set up an associated but separate Charitable Trust. The objects of the Trust would be:

1. To help conserve the natural & built environment of inland waterways for the benefit of the public.
2. To promote the restoration, development and use of inland waterways for navigation and commerce.
3. To educate the public about inland waterways and their history.

The Trust could take responsibility for projects of an educational, heritage or environmental nature where a charitable organisation with a degree of independence from British Waterways could involve others and raise funds not currently accessible. It could manage projects directly or assist by raising funds. It could take responsibility for some of the initiatives under the three focussed themes of the suggested membership scheme. It could take long term leases of waterways managed by British Waterways, or acquire or lease waterways not currently owned or managed by British Waterways. It could be independent with a remit extending to all waterways. The Trust would be managed by a Board of Trustees, with the Chair and two others nominated by British Waterways, and others selected to reflect the range of interests of the Trust.

*cont'd ...*

British Waterways say the Trust concept is well established as a vehicle for managing heritage and environmental organisations and fund raising, and quote examples of local authorities setting up trusts to manage museums and parks. Recently they have created the Waterways Trust to take responsibility for the three museums at Ellesmere Port, Gloucester and Stoke Bruerne. That is already involved in fundraising for the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals, and the Anderton Boat Lift, and, since the consultation document was released, it may become involved in the acquisition or lease of the Rochdale Canal as part of the solution to the funding problems of our neighbouring restoration scheme. The existing Waterways Trust could serve as the basis from which the proposed wider trust is created.

You might not be surprised that I have views on these suggestions!

I have no doubt that a membership scheme has attractions, but whether sufficient people will be willing to fork out the level of subscriptions suggested remains to be seen. That may depend on whether the range of benefits offered is worthwhile. I wonder whether it might not be more attractive to offer a membership scheme affiliated to the proposed Trust, rather than affiliated to British Waterways - will people volunteer for a nationalised industry?

Waterways enthusiasts are not all wealthy. It would be tragic if the scheme succeeded, but at the expense of a reduced membership for local waterway societies, or (perhaps more likely?) the IWA.

As British Waterways say the charitable trust approach is a well tried formula. Indeed HCS is such a body. We know the formula works, provided the trust has initiative and

energetic leadership. It could be a means of introducing much needed funds to the waterways. The Trust could take on restoration projects from the small scale of waterside buildings, right up to the level of complete waterways. It could boost the heritage aspects of British Waterways commercial interests. It is important, however, that it is given sufficient independence, otherwise it will be seen by potential funders and project partners as merely a financial device controlled by British Waterways (*for the Treasury! Ed*).

In "Moving Road", the journal of the Calder Navigation Society, Keith Noble reminded readers that for a long time it had been suggested that all of the waterways should be managed by a Trust, just as the National Trust manages property. I agree that should be our aim, and that could be a far better solution than the current multitude of owners, with British Waterways being the leading one, but constrained by nationalised industry status.

That is not what is suggested here, but that should not colour our view of the present proposals for a much more limited trust. So far as I am concerned I believe the principle is admirable. I just hope they get the detail and the degree of independence right. If it is a lapdog of British Waterways it will fail.

Keith Gibson

*Copies of the consultation document "Partnership with the People" are available from British Waterways (phone: 01923 20 11 15). Comments are required by 19 November 1999.*

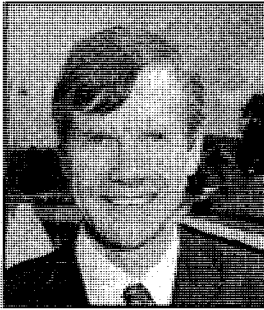


# Huddersfield Canal Company Report

Work on the remaining blockages has really got underway this summer. This is best illustrated by the accompanying photographs.

The **Lock 21 to Wool Road** contract was completed in early July. As I write, in mid-September, work has been in progress at **Standedge Tunnel** for almost four months. This is much in evidence at the Diggle portal where the canal has been dammed to provide dredgings and settlement lagoons and a hardcore access has been constructed into the tunnel. Following dewatering, a sludge pumping range has been laid into the tunnel and progressively extended. David has described the silt removal works in his article. During this initial stage, all the shafts have been inspected and remedial works undertaken to ensure operative safety during reconstruction of the shaft bottoms.

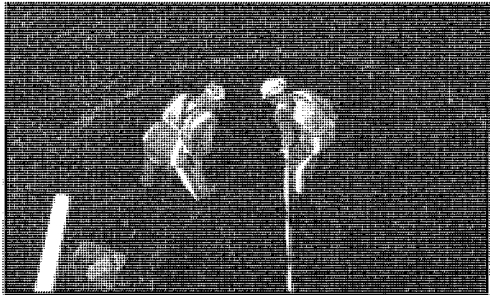
The **Wool Road Bridge** contract has made impressive progress over the first two months.



Early work involved diversion of the canal water via the Diggle Brook and back to the canal downstream, and excavation and strengthening of the old stone arch road bridge. This is now carrying all the road traffic single file with traffic light control. Bulk excavation for the channel and new concrete culvert is already complete

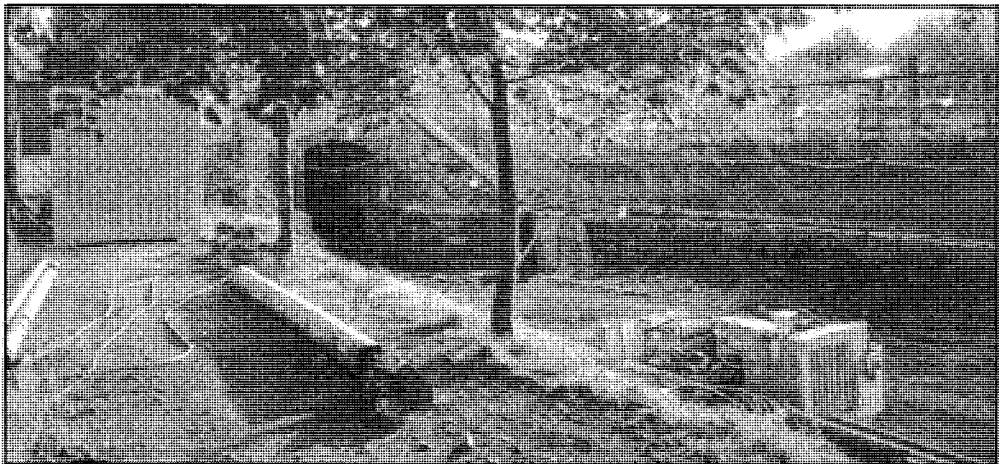
across the main road and construction of the new tunnel is well advanced.

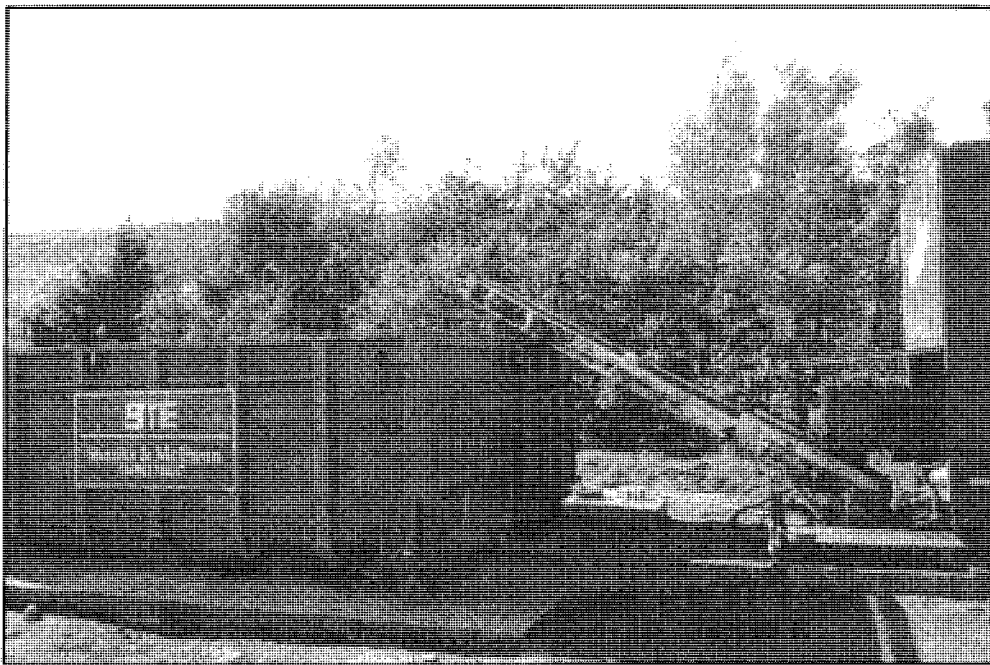
Elsewhere partner organisations are preparing for the start of works. Tameside Council has let Phases 1 and 2 of the **Stalybridge** scheme to Dew Construction of Oldham. These phases involve Mottram Road and Armentieres Square westwards to Caroline



*Right: Preparing a shaft top for concreting following the removal of vegetation. (Courtesy of BW)*

*Below: Diggle Portal showing the access road, service pipes and the specialised low height excavator.*





*Above Right: The mobile treatment plant sited off Ward Lane, Diggle.*

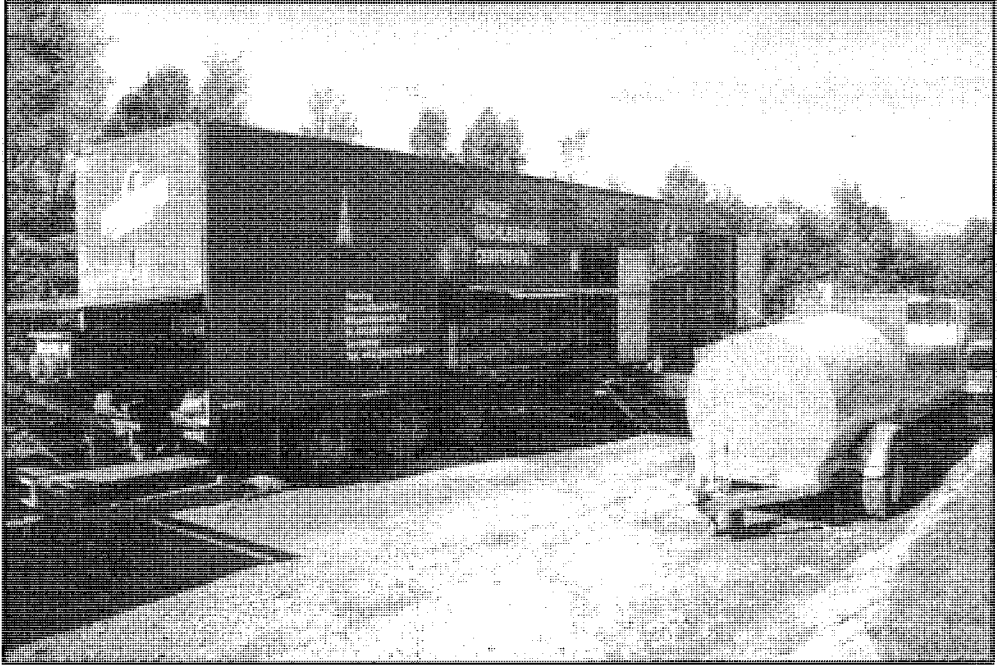
*Above: The solid residue is conveyed to a skip.*

Street. Tenders have been received by the developer for the canal work within the Delta site and demolition of the buildings is well in hand. In Huddersfield, Yorkshire Water's contractor, Barhale is constructing the deep sewer diversion under the proposed canal at Queen Street South. British Waterways has let the main **Bates and Sellers** contract to Costain and a start is imminent. Also in Kirklees, tenders have been returned for **Mark Bottoms and Lees Mill Bridges, Golcar Aqueduct and Holme Mill Bridge, and Slaithwaite**. In Oldham, tenders for the High Street Bridge scheme have already been returned to enable the successful contractor to be involved in the final design work.

On the consultation front, plans for the **Standedge Experience** were shown to Marsden residents in July. People were interested and supportive and gave some

useful feedback on our ideas. A display was also set up at the Colne Valley Trust in mid-August so that Slaithwaite residents could view our proposals. Both of these events were arranged in conjunction with Kirklees Council's 'Enhancing Marsden and Slaithwaite' scheme which involves grants for improving the historic environment of the village centres. This is a welcome scheme, which complements the work of the Canal Company. In the meantime British Waterways have obtained a detailed structural engineers report identifying the work which needs to be done to repair the warehouse building and tenders have been sought for an architect to project manage the refurbishment of the Grade II listed structure.

Marketing initiatives are also progressing. The new issue of the popular Pennine Link fold out leaflet will be published by the time this article appears. Filming for the Company's video has started and the search



is on for historical footage which might be used in the finished article. If you know of anyone who can help with this please contact Ken Stephinson on 01457 820820.

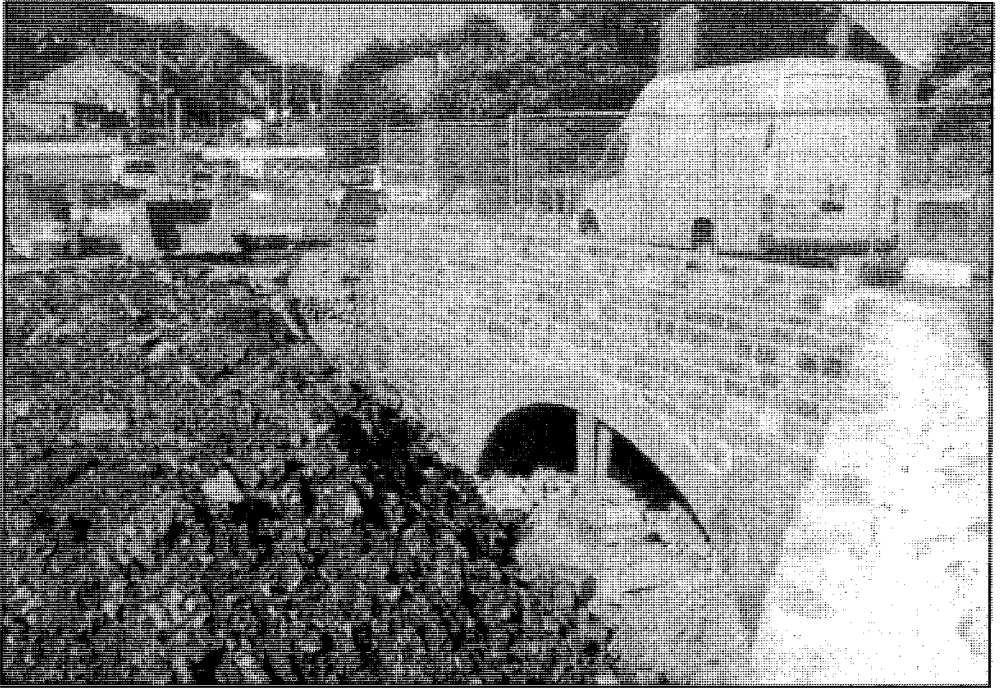
The arts project will soon be underway with the appointment of a specialist project manager. Contact can then be made with all those in the Tame and Colne Valleys who have previously expressed an interest in this part of the work.

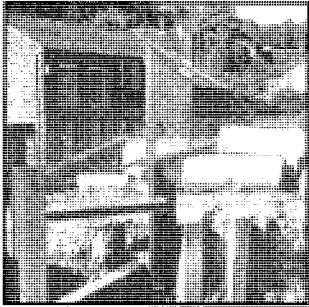
I'm sure all readers will be heartened by the rush of activity on the project. This has come about through a lot of hard work by staff from the partner organisations. I would like to pay tribute to all those involved in implementing the project; the engineers, accountants and procurement advisers at British Waterways and the engineers at Kirklees Oldham and Tameside Councils who have kept up the pressure on preparing contracts and dealing with tenders during a very busy spell. Last but

not least are the Huddersfield Canal Society staff here at Mossley Road who have continued to give me excellent support throughout.

The lead times for publishing a large journal like *Plink* mean that it will be difficult to provide bang up to date information through this medium when things are changing so quickly. More and more people are finding the internet a good way of keeping abreast of events. I'm therefore pleased to say that the shared Canal Society/Canal Company website on [www.hcanals.demon.co.uk](http://www.hcanals.demon.co.uk) is now live, will be updated frequently and provide an additional source of information to supplement the award winning magazine. What better way to keep in touch as we enter Millennium Year than the "information super waterway!" (*But don't worry, those of you whose lives - like mine - are still gas-fired. Plink will get there, eventually!* Ed.)

Alan Stopher





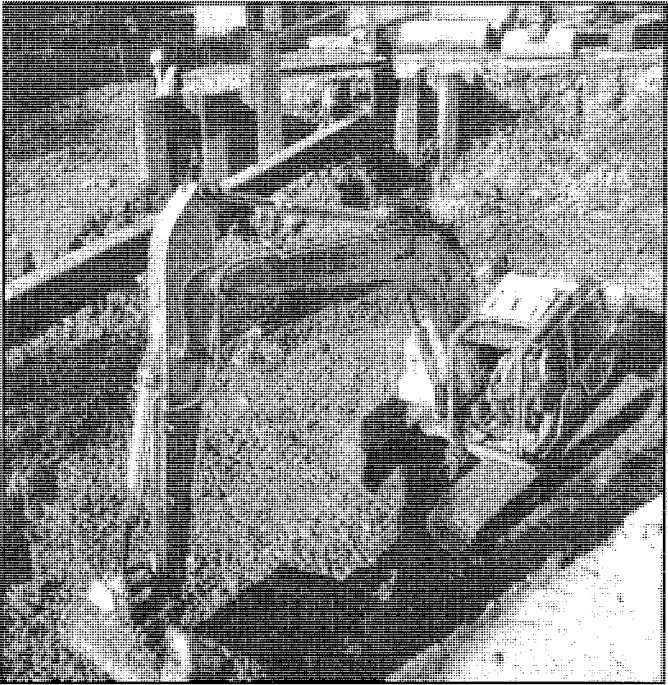
**VIEWS FROM WOOL ROAD, DOBCROSS**

*Left Top: Traffic is being diverted over the strengthened old canal bridge.*

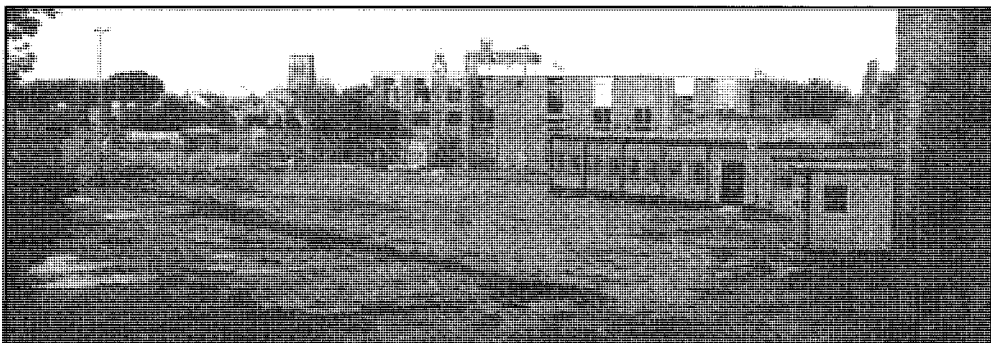
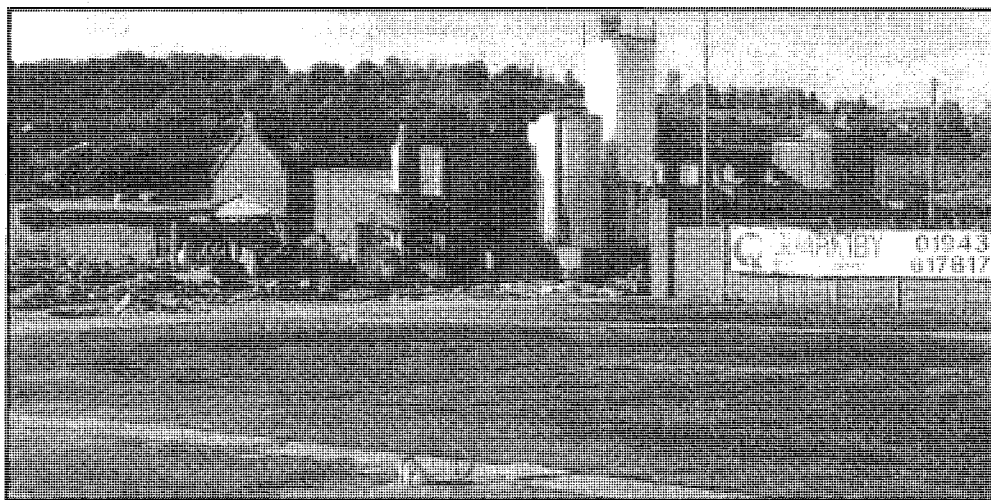
*Left Bottom: Business as usual at the Transhipment Shed despite the close attentions of the contractor.*

*Right: Bulk excavation for the new culvert and channel is virtually complete. The service 'bridge' is also visible in this view taken from the middle of the original carriageway.*

*Below: The original wash walls are being exposed on the right hand side.*







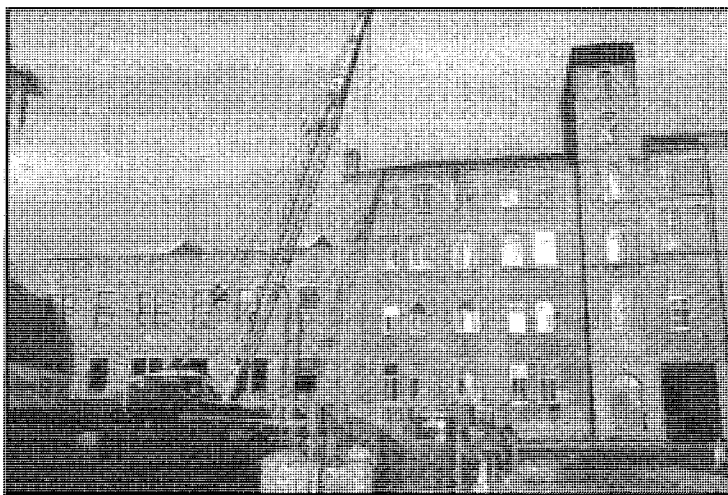
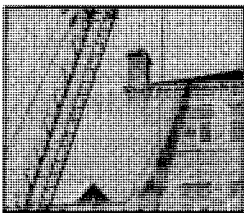
#### **STALYBRIDGE**

*Top: View of demolition in progress on the Delta site as seen from Corporation Street.*

*Above: Buildings have been demolished along the canal corridor in the Delta site.*

#### **HUDDERSFIELD**

*Right: Yorkshire water sewer works in progress in front of Fairfield Mills, Queen Street South. Photos: A. Stopher*





# Inland Waterways Association News

## Press Releases:-

1. Herts Branch gives £21,000 to Wendover Arm Trust collected since 1980 for restoration of 7.5 mile canal arm.
2. As already recorded, an OBE for former National Chairman, Mrs. Audrey Smith.
3. IWA has given grants to Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal Society and Sankey Canal Restoration society from proceeds of 1998 IWA National Festival held at Salford Quays.
4. IWA welcome new BW commitments about greater public involvement in its activities, following launch of BW's consultation on proposed "membership" scheme. (See Keith Gibson's article elsewhere).

The National Trail Boat Festival due to be held in early July was cancelled for lack of sponsorship.

Alan Meale MP launched a scheme for "Waste by Water" and was then scuttled himself in the last Government re-shuffle.

WLMPs (water level management plans) have come to join SPs, LPs, UPs, LEAPs, SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, Ramsor sites and World Heritage sites, not forgetting ESAs. WLMPs are under the jurisdiction of MAFF. Thought you'd like to know!

Huddersfield Narrow Canal restoration is now well under way (officially - the IWA say so!)

And the Rochdale seems to be having another chance. Funding offered over 5 years means financial propping from elsewhere if the 31.12.2001 completion date is to be achieved. And Millennium Commission are, apparently, not too happy with some technical issues.

Update on the Rochdale. The Canal Trust has approached The Waterways Trust (BW controlled) which will

1. take over freehold ownership of the Rochdale
2. receive all grants due for restoration and maintenance
3. raise a loan to create funds to agree with Millennium Commission timetable.

Rochdale and Oldham Councils will pay the interest on the loan. BW will take over restoration and subsequent operation of the canal.

New Chairman of BW is Dr. George Greener, a former senior executive from Mars (the bar, not the planet). 3 years at £60,000 for three days a week. "A Mars a day helps you rest, rest and play".

An extensive BW winter programme comprises 26 schemes over £100,000 including £290,000 on repairs to March Haigh Reservoir on OUR canal. There are also 45 major closures between September and April, mainly between November and March. A lot of this is "backlog" work and we should all be jolly grateful for BW's extra funding. BW have increased the normal Christmas cruising break to allow for Millennium celebrations. Sensible, or sensitive planning, somewhere!

After WLMPs I am not getting involved in Local Biodiversity Plans!

IWA's donation to Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal (mentioned earlier) is £666 to help secure the roof of a building at Nob End Junction.

At BW's Annual Meeting in July a Press Release entitled *2001 - Waterspace Odyssey* was issued claiming that by 2001 BW will have achieved full restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal (*inter alia*). With a little help from their friends! The press release failed to mention any of the other partners involved in the restoration schemes - from volunteer groups to local authorities, etc. - thus taking all the credit for BW. IWA protested strongly and a letter of apology was promptly received.

BW plan to continue consultation with new groups over channel dimensions and canal track statistics for each waterway. By referring to "box section" channel dimensions it still sounds as though silt can be dredged leaving vertical sides. Not so!

BW have also issued a revised draft of their Waterway Standards, criteria for each individual kilometre of waterway. IWA are studying the draft.

*cont'd ...*

There wasn't a 'Council News' in Issue 129 and in Issue 128 I asked your for your views on the future of the Society. You will not be surprised to learn that I didn't get a single one! Mind you, it is difficult enough for Council members to get a grip of, let alone the rest of the membership. And we have been a bit pre-occupied with the running down of HCS Restoration Ltd.

## **Joint meeting of HCS Council and HCS(R) Board - 5 May**

So many items overlapped the two Boards

that joint meetings were proposed for the time being.

HCS has been debating seriously whether or not to try to recover the cost of supplying office services to Huddersfield Canal Company. The politics involved inhibit easy decision making.

HCS with HCC and partners have formed a fund raising group to offset any funding shortages, should they arise, and to produce funds for art-related projects, etc. The Chairman wants HCS to carry on fund-raising in its own right, as well.

The IWA National Waterways Festival took place at Worcester Race Course in late August, too late to be covered by this edition of Plink.

IWA's Oxford Branch celebrated the Diamond (60<sup>th</sup>) anniversary of Tom Rolt's journey in Cressy by re-tracing his first day's journey from Tooley's yard at Banbury, along the Oxford Canal to Cropredy. The journey, written about in Rolt's book *Narrow Boat*, became the inspiration behind the formation of IWA.

Anderton Boat Lift Trust are not launching a public appeal for funds! They intend to raise £970,000 over the next 12 months from charitable trusts and corporate organisations. Hope they have more success than HCS did in the past!

The work on the Ribble Link, joining the Lancaster Canal to the main waterway system, is out to tender. Another Millennium



*Tooley's Yard at Banbury, still in its original shape amongst major modern redevelopment, and now safeguarded against the future as an historic monument. Photo A. Wright.*

Commission scheme, it is due for completion by December 2000.



The Transshipment Warehouse will be kept on for the immediate future as it has become a valuable community centre for Saddleworth.

Mike Thompson brought Council up to date on the current situation regarding the design and operation of Standedge Experience. Our volunteer input is seen as being of major importance.

The intention to close HCS(R) was put forward and agreed.

### **AGM - 11 June**

David's Annual Report was printed in full in the last issue.

A committee is being formed to try to resurrect the Huddersfield Canal Festival to celebrate the re-opening in 2001.

A similar rally is already on the stocks for May Bank Holiday 2001 at Staley Wharf, Stalybridge. Date will be finally set when Yorkshire boats can definitely come direct!

The AGM gave a vote of thanks to all the officers and staff of HCS Restoration Ltd. for their hard work and dedication to the restoration process.

Alan Stopher, at the AGM as an HCS member, comfortably answered questions on the apparent slow start on 'real' work.

### **Joint Meeting - 23 June**

Steve Whitby reported on the current work load of HCS(R). Redundancy packages had been worked out and agreed.

A discussion on fund-raising took place and it was agreed to extend Bob Gough's services until 31 December, for him to concentrate on fund-raising (and the new Web-site, it later transpired).

Frank Smith tabled a report indicating the amount of extra work that the voluntary

'group leaders' would be faced with if/when the full-time staff leave.

Agreed to maintain the Mossley office and the Transshipment Shed for as long as necessary.

We have told the Standedge Experience group that we intend to operate a water taxi. Boat crews are in discussion.

Agreed to run down on sales side (Loxvend Ltd.) and use the sales trailer more for promotional work.

### **Joint meeting - 25 August**

Report on the winding down of HCS(R). Everything proceeding according to plan. Four outdoor staff and one of the office staff have found new jobs, two with British Waterways.

Discussion on Standedge Experience. Still nothing settled.

Discussion on future for volunteer workers. Agreed that canal-related work such as bridge-numbering, bollards, mooring rings, heel-grips, picnic sites, etc. would be a useful way of maintaining contact. More will be known when BW Membership and Partnership plans come to fruition. (*In the pub, afterwards, we also agreed that an official voice at the User Group meetings could keep us busy!*)

Long discussion on our continuing role as a watchdog organisation and also as a partner in HCC. Tact and diplomacy required, not always easy! A new 'media protocol' for all partnership members could tie our hands somewhat and could also lead to a stifling of full publicity of the restoration. We agreed to adopt the protocol and review its operation.

Ken Wright

# Profile - Vince Willey - Boats Officer

I was born in 1947 in Ashton General Hospital and lived on William Street not 200 yards from the canal. My only recollection of this was being taken to stand on a bridge to look down at an inky black stretch of water. I don't remember so much of the actual event but I remember the telling off my elder brother got from my mum, for taking me near that disease ridden open sewer!

We moved to Smallshaw when I was 5 and my only other recollection of the canal was being shown a Certificate of Bravery from the Royal Humane Society awarded to my Dad for saving a man from drowning in the Ashton Canal. I think this was in the 1930's and Dad was never sure if the man wanted saving in the first place. I'm afraid that the nickname of Weaver's Rest for Portland Basin was very true in the not too distant past.

20 years later, married with two children, Peter Ruffley invited us to share a holiday on a narrow boat on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Starting from Skipton, we made our way to Blackburn where we had to pole and rope our way along the famous Embankment due to the debris and animal carcasses that were to be found there.

Next year we went from Portland Basin in one of Tony Shiliday's boats, only to arrive on Saturday morning to find the boat had been vandalised. Being a Building Services Engineer and with the help of Peter Ruffley, an electrician, we left at 3pm Sunday having fitted bunks, hot and cold water system and lighting.

The holiday was not without event, when the propeller was pulled from its coupling going through a bridge hole on the Macclesfield. We borrowed Allen keys from a local engineering firm and managed to get under way; however the stern gland leaked badly.

This was OK during the day as we could run the bilge pump (no automatic float switches in those days!). At night I would seal the leaking gland with extra grease, but after 4 pints of Robbie's bitter in the Ring o' Bells at Marple on the last night I must have dislodged the grease when getting back on board only to be woken

at 3 am when somebody noticed that a suitcase was floating inside the boat! Yes, I have to admit it was me who was running the Engine (attired only in underpants) but that bilge pump did not let me down.

On returning I bought my first boat, a 16ft Callumcraft and started my second refit. Moored at Wayfarer Narrow Boats at Portland Basin. When this changed hands the new owner did not want us, so we moved over to the other side of the basin (a BWB water point) where my attention was drawn to 3 blades of a water wheel.

Two lads from Ashton Canals Society had located the inlet sluice from the canal and started to dig it out. Arthur Hornsby confirmed that the wheel used to power the cranes inside the old warehouse, and wouldn't it change this area completely if, one day, this was restored to its former glory.

We drew this to the attention of Frank Ruffley, who was then a councillor for Tameside, and it was taken up by Ashton planners / libraries with the results that we see today.

Two other boaters and I then started the Moorings on the Ashton Canal behind Elias Wild's Builders Yard. This being my first encounter with dredging (I'm not too sure 'dredging' is the correct word for using a boat's propeller, over a period of three months, to redistribute the silt in Portland Basin).

My first encounter with the Huddersfield Canal Society was through Alan Pollitt at the Ashton Canals Festival, where I acted as his deputy doing Site Services. In the subsequent eleven years, I was chairman three times. In the very early days, I was Ashton Canals Festival representative on the management committee of Tameside Canals Limited.

I helped with the digging out of Lime Kiln Lock, procuring at one hour's notice 50 foot of 8 inch spiral ducting to act as a bywash (I told the fitter to go and look for it in the stores compound again before I ordered some more).

I returned to the HCS Board, via HCS(R) Limited, in 1995 as Boat Officer when Bob

Maycock retired, a job which has not been very onerous due to the fact that Frank Smith and excellent Boat Officers Allan Knott and Gerald & Denise Edinburgh ensure the smooth running of the boats.

I left Hartshead Secondary School three months before sitting my GCE exams for a nine months stay in hospital with TB. I was remembered more for the jabs that my fellow 1,200 pupils had to receive than for my academic achievements!

I passed GCE Maths and Tech drawing whilst staying in hospital but I failed English Language twice. I have since discovered that I am dyslexic (in those days they didn't accept this) "Willey, you have intelligence written all over face but it's spelt wrongly" – quote from Mr. Rogers, my English teacher.

After 3 months of convalescence at home I started work at Hall & Kay Ltd, Birch Street, Guide Bridge, (backing on to the Ashton canal) as an Air Conditioning draftsman. I gained an ONC from Ashton College and an HNC from Salford Tech.

At 21 years of age I moved to Glossop and for 14 years designed, installed and commissioned all types of Building Services installations. I then changed career to become a Building Services controls design engineer and although the company is now owned by an American group, and computer logic has replaced relay logic ( I can now adjust the temperature in a building practically anywhere in the world with the aid of a modem - if anyone can explain why I need to would they please let me know.)

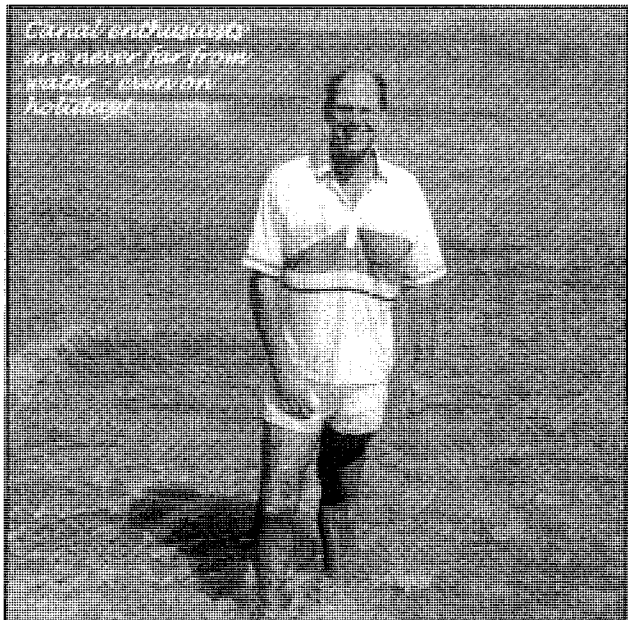
I am now working from home for the same company using today's technology. In 35 years I have come full circle and I am drawing control systems, but the mouse has

now replaced my 4H pencil. (For the younger readers 4H is the hardness of pencil lead - and has not been metricated yet!)

For the past seven years, I have lived in Mossley with Diane, only 200 yards from the Huddersfield Canal. We enjoy walking along the towpath, taking photographs and keeping track of the restoration efforts from an "other users" point of view. I still have a boat at Top Lock, Marple and this year we have brought a friend's boat back from Windmill End, Birmingham up the Staffordshire & Worcester, down the Caldon for a couple of days and then up the Trent and Mersey and finally up the Macclesfield back to Marple, noting many of the changes that have taken place over the past 20 odd years. Many good (back to the old style paddle gear, oak gates, deeper canals, automatic Swing Bridges, more people using footpaths and better maintenance) some bad (Bird In Hand gone) and some things that don't change (yes, it rained!).

I hope to still be involved with HCS for many years to come after the canal is open.

Vince Willey



# The Wife's Tale - Part 38

*It's the middle of May 1998 and Anne & Ken, with their two dachshunds, Bill and Lizzie, are on the Mon & Brec meandering their way to Brecon, enjoying gloriously hot weather.*

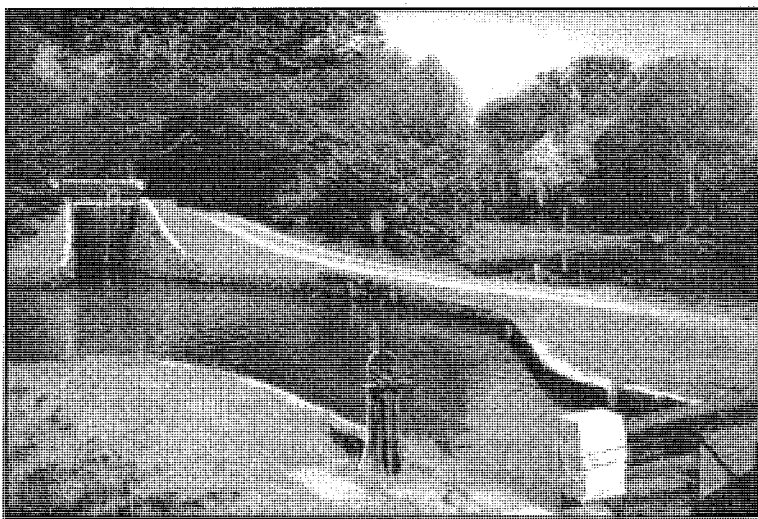
## Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1998

Woken up at some ungodly hour by a huge May bug crawling over my face and, consequently, fell out of bed with a huge crash, trying to get the insect out of the window. HE didn't even stir! The rooks eventually got us up at 7.25 - quick breakfast and locked at 8am - people waiting to come down - hence the hurry as the water was with us and of course we/ they didn't want to waste it. Trent & Mersey gearing on bottom paddles, two gates, ground paddles only on top single gate. Decided to walk to the next lock with the dogs and then on to the set of three where there was a BW Yard and Country Craft Cruisers. Took the chance to take on water and got chatting to a couple who had been stuck there for a couple of days but were hoping to get going again that day. Engine trouble I gathered. Made top lock and through by 9.30 - having to empty lock and leave bottom gates open (Mon and Brec style) took time and, to our way of thinking is a waste of water. But, according to the lady at Country

Craft, this is to keep the load on the embankment to a minimum and lessen the likelihood of a breach. Got quite a system going with HIM helping to fill the locks. After operating the tug on the Huddersfield Narrow for so long he's a dab hand at locking on his own!

Soon we were leaving the hills and rolling pastureland flanked the canal. Ashford Tunnel (375yds long) soon came upon us. Ten minutes to get through though at times wondered if we were going to get stuck as only **two inches** to spare at times. Again we were thankful we had a full tank of water to hold the bows down! It was gunite lined so not many drips. Kept a tight hold of the dogs - they'd never been in a tunnel before. Shouldn't have worried - they didn't even stir they are so laid back!

It wasn't long before we reached Talybont, passing through the village on a high embankment. The lift bridge was already being opened as we approached and so as not to delay the line of traffic waiting to cross, we were waved through. Lunch and



*Pound above bottom lock - note open bottom gates.*



a pint beckoned, so moored up and walked into the sleepy village. The three pubs all looked pleasant but decided on the Star Inn with its beautiful walled garden down to the river and within sight of two very old bridges. Too nice to sit indoors and in any case we had the dogs with us. We had an excellent lunch with HIM having two pints of Shepherd Neame's Bishop's Finger - what a treat. All I can say is that I was glad we didn't have to operate the lift bridge!

Three hydraulic lift bridges on the next section leading to farmland/farms. Two open and one closed - 48 turns of the windlass one way and 28 down!

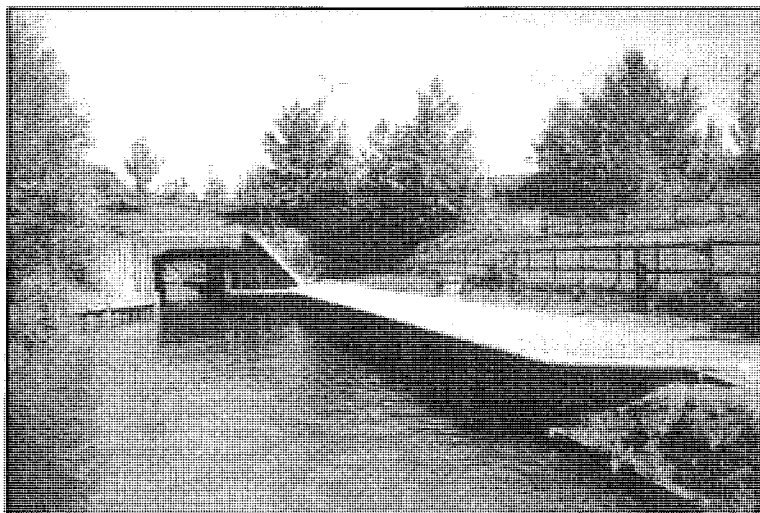
The scenery was breathtakingly beautiful. Watched a buzzard soaring up into the sky - what a lovely sight, and thanks to the binoculars could see all the markings quite clearly. I just wished we'd had more time to stop and wander, but we had decided to make for Brecon as quickly as we could and then meander slowly back to base,

stopping here and there as the mood and time allowed.

Stopped at 3pm just short of the Brynich aqueduct so that HE could have a sleep (strong stuff that Bishop's Finger!) and left him stretched out on the cabin roof while I took the dogs for a walk. Could see plenty of work taking place ahead on the beautiful river. The tow-path was wide and obviously well used judging by the numbers of walkers and cyclists who passed. By the time we got back HE was awake and raring to go. It wasn't long before we came to the last lock before Brecon. By the lock was a large sign which gave the information that this was the Brecon to Brynich cycleway with a contract sum of £120,000. And what a cycleway! Not solely for the use of cyclists but also for walkers and fisherfolk. BUT, although it looked very nice and wide and clean, I couldn't get off at the bridges because of guard rails and in places there was a 45 degree slope down to the water's edge. One woman nearly lost her footing stepping out of the way of

a couple of cyclists and only just managed to save herself from slipping into the water.

The entry into Brecon is quite attractive with many pretty houses and well kept gardens coming down to

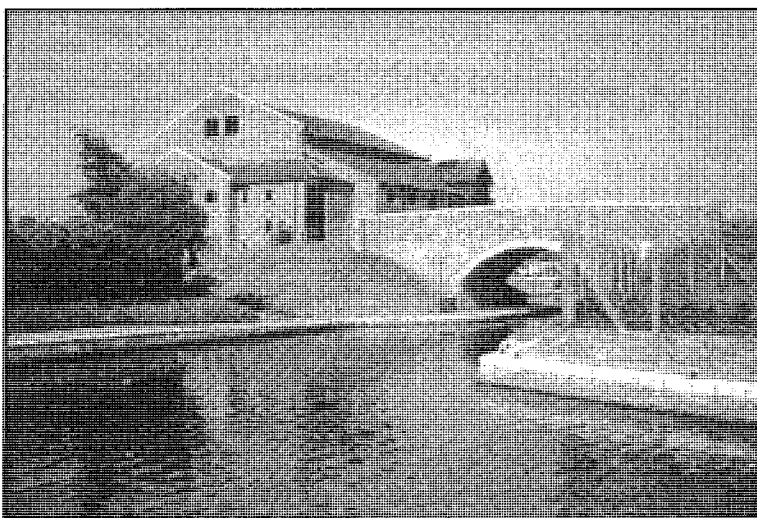


*Cycleway, bridge with handrail under - and 45° slope to water!*

the canal. Very impressed with the renovation work and the construction of two new mooring basins. The last one was the basin to the new, very modern receiving theatre where we had originally intended to moor. Plenty of mooring rings, large square expanse of water with a restaurant boat moored at one end. However, as we seemed very exposed and all noise echoed around, plus the fact that there was a building site right up to the tow path, we decided to move back to the next basin. Three other boats did exactly the same! The new building works were luxury flats/apartments - and what a view - canal and the Brecon Beacons - very des. res. All buildings, although modern, were sympathetic to the surroundings. The theatre must have cost a great deal of money and, apart from a restaurant inside, had canal inspired seats and tables outside overlooking the basin. Canalia was dotted here and there and there were plenty of people sitting around enjoying the summer evening. We got the impression that it was quite a meeting place. Unfortunately there was nothing on at the theatre that night - one just finished and another coming in - just our luck.

After a walk round the theatre and the basin we went the short distance up the hill into the town. Never seen

so many pubs and hotels which all seemed well kept. But then, it is a garrison town! Had a look at the castle, river and riverside walk and what we saw impressed us greatly. Plenty to do tomorrow in more detail. Back to the boat for dinner after which, and because it was such a lovely evening, more walks. This time past the barracks, bristling with surveillance cameras, along the road and back along the canal. Notices everywhere saying dogs banned! Fines £100. We took this to mean no fouling, and quite right too, not that dogs were banned generally. Now this is a subject that we have very strong views about. I have kept dogs all my life and am of the opinion that you must clean up after your dog, whether it be in a town, country lane, field, woods or your own back yard. Everywhere we go with the dogs we have pockets full of polythene bags and pieces of kitchen roll and it doesn't take a minute to clean up if your dog does happen to foul. Hand inside the bag, paper on the offending pile, scoop up, bag inside out,



*New theatre and canal basin, Brecon*

tie it up and *voila*, all ready for the nearest bin.

When we got back to the boat we'd wished the couple in the next boat with an Elk Hound felt the same - right outside our boat was the biggest load of s\*\*\* you have seen; and not one but three lots. They had made no attempt to clear it up, so HE with a bit more noise than necessary did the honours. It's just not on.

We still smiled and said a cheery "good evening" and held a civilised conversation with them - but I think they'd got the message without us saying a dickey bird. No point being unpleasant about it!

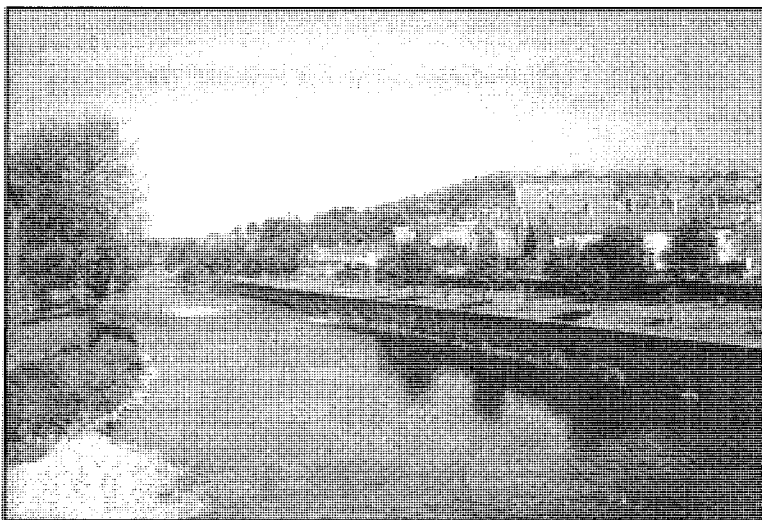
Drinks on the after deck, a warm summer's night, peaceful location - what could be better to end a lovely day.

Leisurely get up after a very good night's sleep. The dogs had a good run and walk before we left them in the boat and went to have a good look round Brecon. First to the promenade/riverside walk - a newly

created walk by the Usk and quite delightful - well laid out gardens, trees and paths - which took us to the castle which is part of the Castle Hotel. Permission must be obtained from the hotel to explore. It was a pleasant walk through the old streets to the Cathedral and we spent a good hour looking round. Well worth the visit. Everyone we met was friendly, extremely helpful and eager to engage in conversation. My camera was clicking away. We enjoyed Brecon and it is "somewhere we would like to go back to" - perhaps a long week-end. The combination of old and new works well. Interesting shopping area, which we took advantage of and bought, amongst other things, two small folding chairs so that we could sit out on deck. The time we had there was all too short and after a quick sandwich and drink in the sunshine on the back of the boat, it was with reluctance that we upped the moorings and set off.

Next time - the return journey.

*All Photos: A. Wright*



*Brecon 'prom'*

# Huddersfield Canals on Postcards

I thought that I would take this subject next, if only because ending on it just did not seem the right thing to do! In fact there have only been two incidents featured on cards, and I don't know anything about one of those!

First, two cards about which I do know something. These are both of Appleyard, on the curving pound between Locks 14E and 15E below Golcar and show the aftermath of a cloudburst on the evening of Sunday 24

July 1904, when well over three inches of rain fell between 8.0 p.m. and 11.0 p.m. Many people will be familiar with the steady silting caused by the brook running through the canal at this point, but in this case the canal was completely blocked in a matter of minutes. At that time the Golcar sewage works was situated on the offside of the canal at this point and one of the settling tanks was washed away, debris blocking the canal for about 60 yards. Towards Ramsden

Mills, the towpath collapsed under the strain, allowing the water into the mill dam beyond.

The two cards, both apparently productions by local photographers, no doubt very soon after the event, show the efforts to clear the canal, using picks, shovels



*Above: "Golcar. L.N.W. Canal after the flood. July 24 1904".*

*A locally-produced card, looking from the offside of the canal towards the river and Manchester Road. 20+ men engaged in the laborious task of digging out the canal by hand and apparently barrowing the debris some distance, judging by the barrow run.*

*Right: Untitled. The opposite view to the previous card and more of a "posed" shot. The arches of the railway viaduct can just be made out in the background.*



## 9 - Disasters etc.

and barrows. One looks from the towpath, the other from the opposite bank. The account does not say how long the repairs took!

To mark the spot, and because it does not readily fit into any other category, I am including "The Canal, Golcar", a black and white card which may possibly be post-WW2, judging by the style of the back.

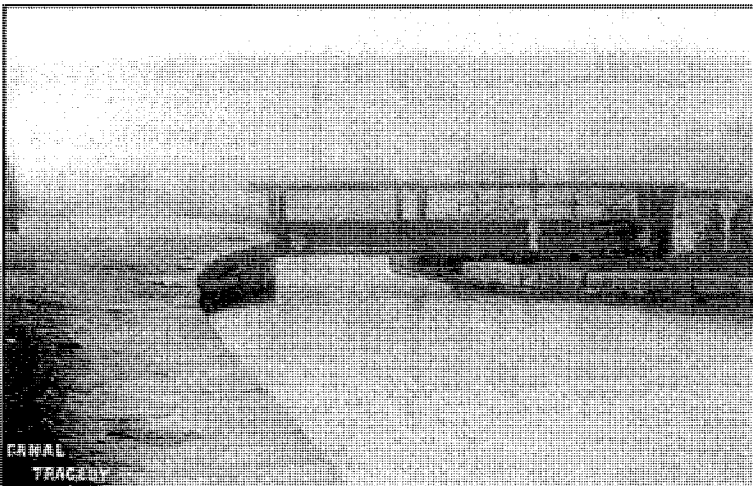
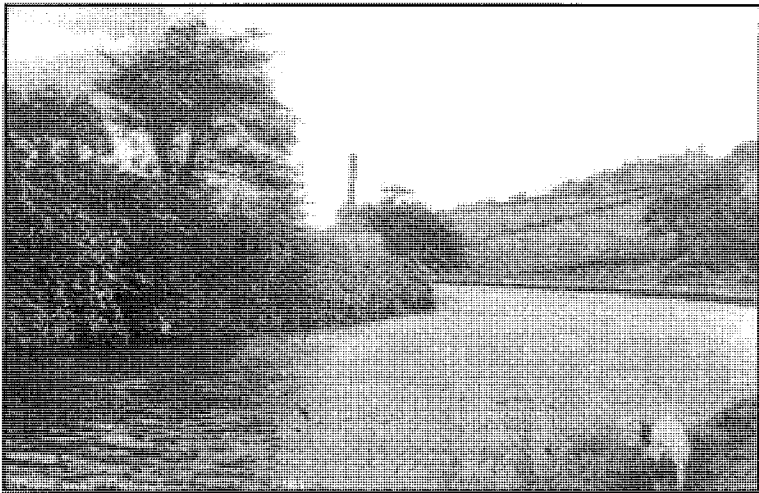
There is no maker's name, but the number (1753) suggests a large, national firm. The view is taken roughly where the stream which caused the problem in 1904 crosses and the chimney in the distance is Ramsden Mills.

The other incident is one for those on the west side. Entitled "Canal Tragedy", it shows Grove Road swing bridge, with

Lock 8W visible in the distance.

No explanation is offered of the nature of the tragedy - does anyone know? I would suspect from the fact that there is no damage apparent, that it might have been a drowning, but it must have had a fair amount of publicity at the time to make publishing a card worthwhile.

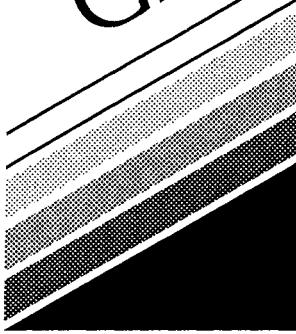
Trevor Ellis



Above: "The Canal, Golcar".  
From a similar position to the previous card, but looking towards Huddersfield, with the Manchester Road (A62) high on the right and the chimney of Ramsden Mills in the distance.

Left: "Canal Tragedy".  
Grove Road Swingbridge, with Lock 8W in the background.

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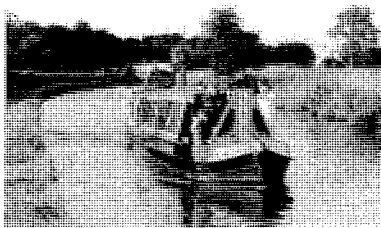
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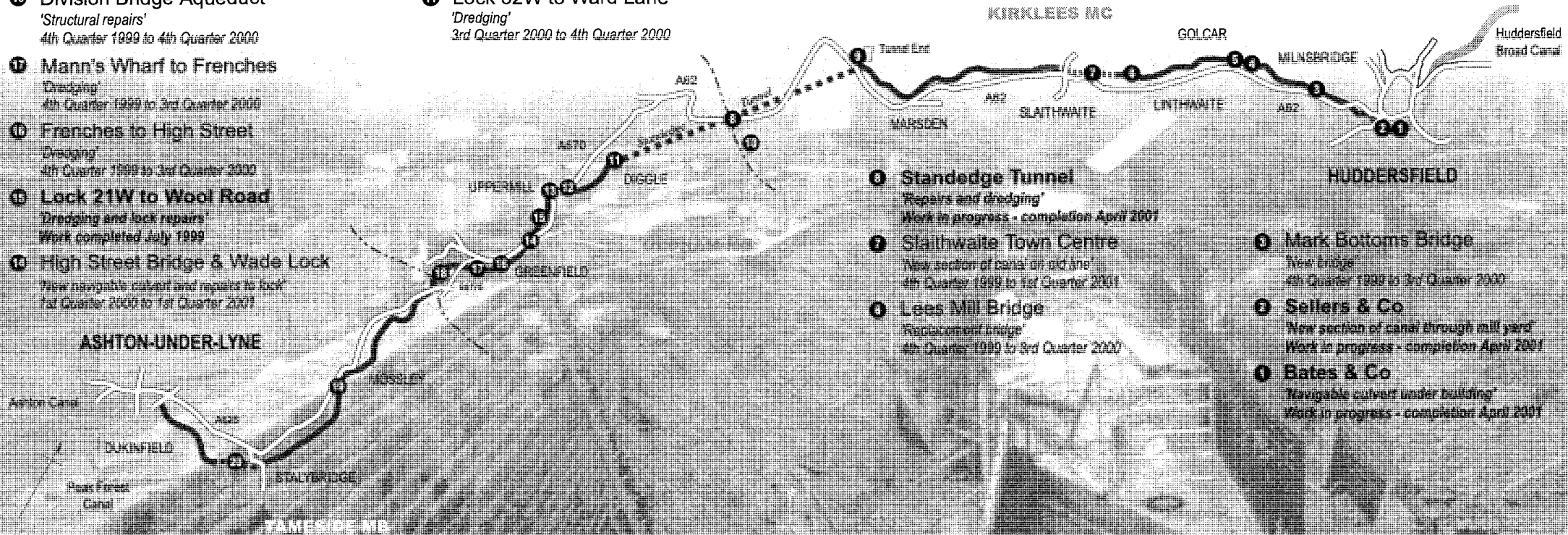
# The Remaining Blockages on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Autumn 1999

- 20 **Stalybridge Town Centre**  
*'Excavation of old canal line with new locks and bridges'*  
*Work in progress - completion February 2001*
- 19 **Scout Tunnel**  
*'Internal repairs'*  
*Work in progress - completion April 2001*
- 18 **Division Bridge Aqueduct**  
*'Structural repairs'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 4th Quarter 2000*
- 17 **Mann's Wharf to Frenches**  
*'Dredging'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 3rd Quarter 2000*
- 16 **Frenches to High Street**  
*'Dredging'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 3rd Quarter 2000*
- 15 **Lock 21W to Wool Road**  
*'Dredging and lock repairs'*  
*Work completed July 1999*
- 14 **High Street Bridge & Wade Lock**  
*'New navigable culvert and repairs to lock'*  
*1st Quarter 2000 to 1st Quarter 2001*

- 13 **Old Sag Aqueduct**  
*'Structural repairs'*  
*1st Quarter 2000 to 2nd Quarter 2000*
- 12 **Wool Road Bridge & Lock 24W**  
*'New navigable culvert and repairs to lock'*  
*Work in progress - completion April 2000*
- 11 **Lock 32W to Ward Lane**  
*'Dredging'*  
*3rd Quarter 2000 to 4th Quarter 2000*

- 10 **Water Supply Works**  
*'Improvements to reservoir feeders'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 4th Quarter 2000*
- 9 **Standedge Experience**  
*'Visitor/Heritage Centre'*  
*2nd Quarter 2000 to 1st Quarter 2001*

- 5 **Holme Mill Bridge**  
*'Replacement bridge'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 3rd Quarter 2000*
- 4 **Golcar Aqueduct**  
*'Structural repairs'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 3rd Quarter 2000*



- 8 **Standedge Tunnel**  
*'Repairs and dredging'*  
*Work in progress - completion April 2001*
- 7 **Slaithwaite Town Centre**  
*'New section of canal' off old line'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 1st Quarter 2001*
- 6 **Lees Mill Bridge**  
*'Replacement bridge'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 3rd Quarter 2000*

- 3 **Mark Bottoms Bridge**  
*'New bridge'*  
*4th Quarter 1999 to 3rd Quarter 2000*
- 2 **Sellers & Co**  
*'New section of canal through mill yard'*  
*Work in progress - completion April 2001*
- 1 **Bates & Co**  
*'Navigable culvert under building'*  
*Work in progress - completion April 2001*

**Inset: Wool Road Bridge in September 1960**  
J. Kay, courtesy of Stalybridge Reference Library



# Canal Cruises

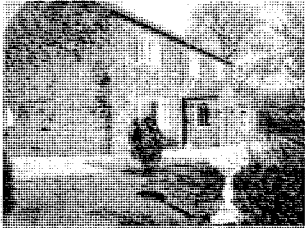
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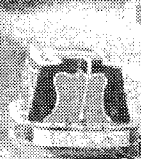
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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Owing to the restoration work on Standedge Tunnel and the planned works at Tunnel End, Marsden, the Tunnel End Canal and Countryside Centre, will be closing down permanently as of 31st December 1998.



## Harwood's Thames - Part 2

*The second episode in John Harwood's eventful trip on Old Father Thames*

The sea lock at Limehouse has recently been rebuilt with radial gates which hold water either way. Thus they hold back the waters in the basin but can also prevent high tides running into the basin. They are little unnerving to watch, however, as there are no paddles - the gates merely open a bit and water gushes under and between them but, as the lower gates part, a vast panorama opens in front of you. To the right, upstream, a vast width of water (well, vast to narrowboaters anyway) disappears into the distance whilst, to the left, the river curves away downstream, dominated by the tower at Canary Wharf. Luckily for us we were preceded by a pair of hotel narrowboats, as the water was that rough (in narrowboat terms). I did ponder turning back for a few seconds - but "if they can do it so can we" and if it was dangerously rough we wouldn't have been let out anyway - would we?

Having settled into the routine of the river, and learnt to stem the wash of larger craft, one has no sooner blinked than Tower Bridge approaches - and passes. One has to keep the camera busy (and eyes in the back of the head) as so much happens so quickly up here. There isn't time to note all the sights. Obviously Tower Bridge, the Tower of London, the South Bank Centre and Parliament (oh yes, and Battersea Power Station) all stand out and command the view, but the lesser sights have passed before you can recognise them - the steerer obviously is kept busy thinking way ahead (and behind) if he (she) is not to let down the smaller boat community and keep his crew safe. In and past the centre the water becomes a lot more stable giving you a little

more time to try and take in the views.

Putney Bridge brings you to the start of the boat race course and is notable by the number of rowing club houses there. Also notable by now was a smell of diesel which caused us to look into the engine compartment to see a steady flow of diesel escaping from a fuel line. Apart from Thames rules saying you must have short wave radio or a mobile phone the need now becomes obvious as one can at least consult the boatyard on the move to decide what to do next - which is to hope we reach Teddington and get off the tidal water. Unfortunately the fates are at work again as right on the boat race finishing line the engine dies! Now I admit I had put in a bit of work in advance of going on tidal water right down to giving the propeller a final check that morning - but none of my preparatory thoughts had included a dead engine. A couple of attempted starts decide us that the engine is best forgotten for the moment and other arrangements made. Yes, the anchor, all tied and ready to throw, except that if thrown now it is clear that we will end up swinging against Chiswick Bridge out of control - plan B abandoned. Plan C is just in formulation when the tide brings us broadside onto the pier of the bridge. This could be worrying until all settles and it is clear that the flow is quite gentle and the boat seems happy to stay there. It now strikes me that there is some advantage in being stationary on a tidal flow rather than to be drifting with no control. So, here we stay and start running up the mobile phone bill with the boatyard, who promise to come as quickly as possible - by helicopter would have suited me!

Members of a local rowing club now start shouting across that they have rung the Port

of London Authority and, lo and behold, within ten minutes a launch arrives - blue lights and all and proceeds to take us in tow to Chiswick Pier where the engine is duly mended. By now we've missed the tide and perforce must spend the night here waiting for the next daylight tide. At this stage I consider that a little (lot) of Highland comfort is in order, the sun being well over the yardarm (on a narrowboat?) and no Valium to hand! To be followed by a well earned snooze, only to be rudely awakened by an almighty banging and crashing - my mind full of the worst things that can happen on tidal water as opposed to good old BW's 2'-6" if you're lucky. Getting outside I find that the noise emanates from

the attempted landing of a three deck, twin hulled, twin engined cruiser with fifteen steering positions, flying bridge, radar, depth sounder, bow thruster etc, etc - all of which apparently make it very difficult to get alongside a pier without a lot of banging. It transpires that the pilot is in a bad mood because the Police had held them up in central London due to the shooting of the next Bond film and the manoeuvres thus caused had resulted in the spilling of much G & T. The pilot's mood was further affected as he apologised profusely to his wife for making her spend the night moored next to a 'tin can'. Never mind - tomorrow gets us to still waters.

John Harwood

## Enhancing Slaithwaite & Marsden

A programme of physical regeneration is being launched in the communities of Marsden and Slaithwaite by Kirklees Council and the Colne Valley Trust with funding from English Heritage. The three year programme aims to support the local economy as well as enhance the historic environment. It is timed to complement the restoration of the canal.

Concentrating on the main Conservation Area shopping streets of Marsden and Slaithwaite, the scheme will include three elements:

- \* Streetscape work including stone paving, new streetlights and seating and the enhancement of public spaces.

- \* Shopfront grants for repair and restoration work.

- \* Building repair grants for repairs to the external fabric of commercial buildings.

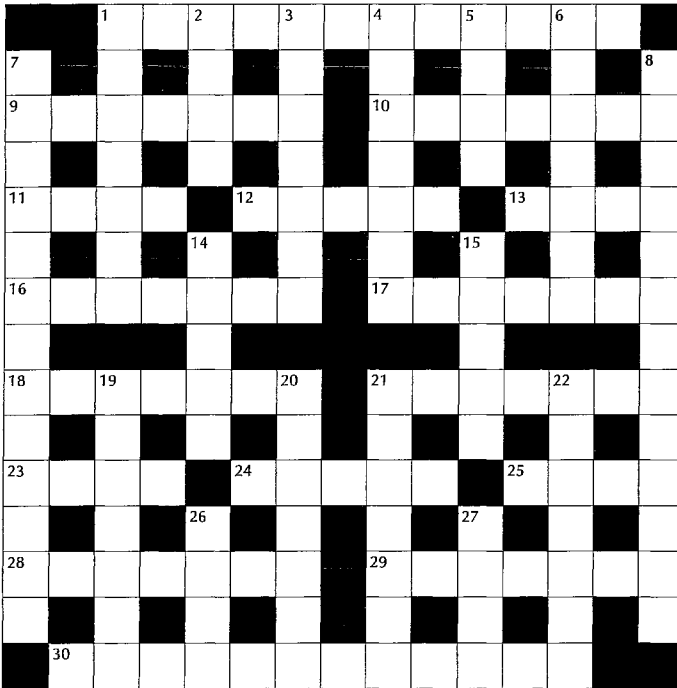
The grant schemes began in August. Streetscape improvements will begin in Marsden in Autumn of this year, and in Slaithwaite in 2001 after completion of the canal works.

Comments on the programme can be made, and application packs for grants are available from:

Dinah Nichells  
Implementation Team  
KMC Planning Services  
PO Box B93  
Civic Centre III  
Huddersfield  
HD1 2JR.



# Canal Crossword - 26



## ACROSS

- 1 L & L sea outlet! (8,4).  
 9 OU doors open on stagnant, smelly waterway (7).  
 10 Watch the contents of an ocular socket (7).  
 11 No 2 on a Yankee vessel (4).  
 12 The Duke of Bridgewater was a gentleman, John Gilbert was his right hand man (5).  
 13 Naps taken on a Tom Pudding (4).  
 16 Artless boat operators on the Thames at Oxford (7).  
 17 Tar, horse dung and cow hair boiled and applied to the bottom of boats (7).  
 18 Where a small bird crosses shallow water on the highest part of the BCN (7).  
 21 Maize eaten by a male swan - nice with butter on! (7).  
 23 Wild boar should learn to row - (4).  
 24 - whilst another wild boar rows across a river to help a fletcher (5).

- 25 Nautical filling for boater's sandwiches (4).  
 28 Site hat must be worn when loading coal at a Yorkshire jetty. EC 26156/99 B(34/j8) applies (7).  
 29 Vessel made in attic is unsinkable (7).  
 30 Lottery funding guarantees an elevating experience here in the future (8,4).

## DOWN

- 1 Severn cargo boat loaded with a measure of cloth plying the Nottingham canal near an M1 service area (7).  
 2 Chess piece found in a tree (4).  
 3 Sensing flags are about to be unfurled (7).  
 4 Cocaine found in large seas (7).  
 5 Welsh veg found on Caldon canal formerly (4).  
 6 Boating chap at Indian restaurant likes bread (7).  
 7 On King's reach by Waterloo Bridge find a building that held many records (8,5).  
 8 Lancaster's 1 across (7,6).  
 14 Further on find a fishing bird (5).  
 15 Two narrowboats with two more narrowboats (5).  
 19 One raft found on a Welsh canal (7).  
 20 Yonder went a river through Derby (7).  
 21 Highland dwelling housing a pump on the K & A (7).  
 22 Appropriate section of the Caldon canal on which to prepare butter etc (7).  
 26 Eye malady caught in an Eastern pighthouse (4).  
 27 You and I take some tea in a sewing box (4).

*Crossword Solution on Page 55*

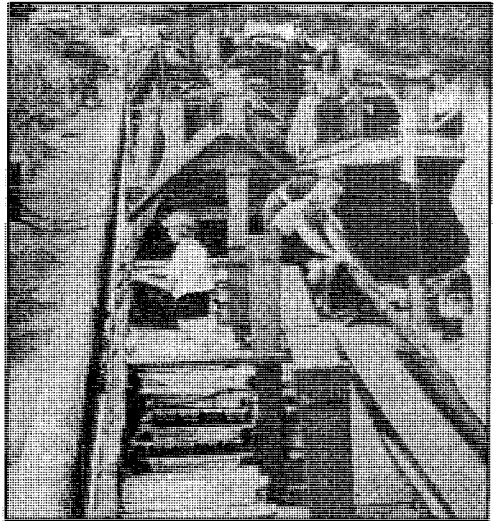
# The Distaff Side - Idle Women

The fourth, and final, part of the stories of the middle class young ladies who volunteered to work on canal boats during the 1939-45 War. M & M Baldwin, publishers of the 'Working Waterways' series of books, have given us permission to print excerpts from four of their books which feature these courageous women in action.

'Troubled Waters' was first published in 1987 and is, therefore, very much a 'retrospective', drawing upon the author's memory and diary notes. It concentrates on the personalities involved as well as the trials and tribulations and makes it quite clear that all was not 'sweetness and light' on the wartime 'cut'! The subject matter is treated in a very mature way, with the hindsight of over thirty years, and with far more 'openness' in the modern writing-style than in the previous three books. Once again we meet Emma Smith (Maiden's Trip), Susan Woolfit (Idle Women) and Sonia, who first married boatman George Smith, later married Tom Rolt, and is still a powerful force to be reckoned with in waterway circles.

The excerpts are taken by Ken Wright from the M & M Baldwin edition, dated 1994.

A windlass was a personal possession and, even within the family, each windlass belonged exclusively to its owner. Like a favourite cricket bat, it had the right feel, handgrip, weight, balance which made it special for the owner. Possession was assured by the constant wearing of the windlass, either tucked into a leather belt in the crook of a back or slouched over a shoulder under the jacket so that the hump of it added a grotesque shape to the boatman's shoulders already bent with years of hauling and loading. So, it was always



Women man the boats at the wharf just past the depot at Bull's Bridge. Cetus was butty to Hercules and Hyperion. The boat in the foreground is loaded with aluminium bars.

ready, at hand to wind the paddles, to be swung round in aggression, to be used as a hammer, scoop or any other makeshift device required for the variety of incidents which beset a boatman's existence.

—oOo—

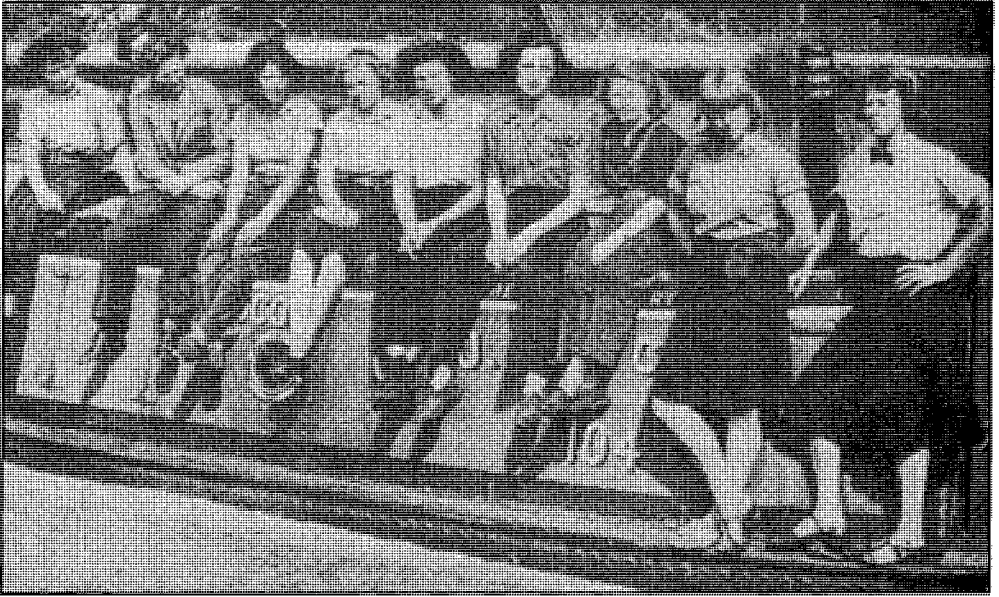
The tunnel was just ahead and we had not made it in time. The dreaded timber barge was stuck firmly in the entrance while a solid, patient horse leaned heavily on a line to the fore-end of the wide barge piled high with timber. There were men everywhere shouting instructions back into the darkness of the tunnel mouth.

'You'll have to offload. Too much on. Told you.'

'You'll have to wait, missus,' another shouted at us. 'Better tie up. We'll not get this shifted tonight.'

'You better 'ad - there's muck barges due up tomorrow early.'

cont'd ...



*Some of the women trainees. Emma Smith, author of Maiden's Trip is second from the right.*

I saw Ben, the friendly lock-keeper, arrive on the scene.

'They're sending a tug,' I heard him say.

'Something on the bottom - a barrel most likely. Get another line out. Try to winch her through.'

—oOo—

Warily I clambered back to the shelter of the well-deck, heaved the wooden tiller into its slot and dropped limply across the support of its length. My undue weariness was due partly to hunger. I had eaten only an apple and a piece of cake since breakfast. The tea and the half-mug of cocoa had revived me at the time but now there was a gnawing hole in my gut and a great lassitude through my whole body.

—oOo—

The stern was beginning to swing away from the bank. I should have called to Mary or

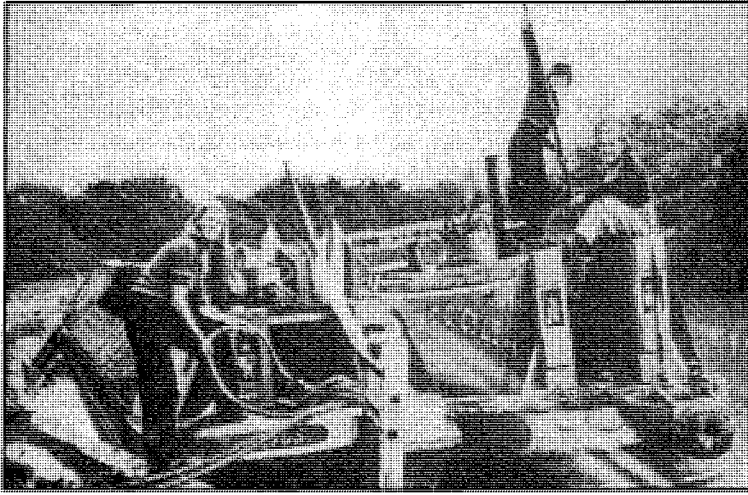
Daphne and thrown a rope across. But no! I had to step up onto the deck side, rope in hand, and take a flying leap to the receding bank. Of course I missed and was down over my head into the black, cold water. Instinctively I kicked my way upwards and grabbed at the sides of the coping. Mary stood there looking at me helplessly while I tried to find a toehold. I was still holding the rope and shouted at her to take it.

'Put it through a ring and tie it.'

'She's gone in,' said Bash cheerfully as Daphne joined them.

—oOo—

The long-skirted women would step off from the butty almost elegantly and judge to a nicety the speed of the boat so that an easy turn with the checking-strap around the 'stump' or bollard would allow it to slide into the lock barely grazing the lockside in its progress. At the same time they would often be shouting instructions about the



The author (left) after she became skipper of the working pair Hercules and Cetus.

cooking or the cat or the children to someone still down in the cabin.

—oOo—

It had been thought at the Ministry that recruits from the tougher districts of London might prove more suitable for work on the boats than those from the professional and leisured classes who, until then, had formed the majority of the women trainees, and Peggy was one of the first from the new recruitment drive. After my training I stayed on Capricorn and Cleopatra for a further six months as trainer's mate, and during that period we had a succession of these 'tough' characters. They left even more speedily than those from the more privileged backgrounds, many not completing even the initial training trips.

—oOo—

We were lucky and met with the pairs which had been tied with us back in the dock. Two of the pairs were carrying crates of tinned meat. Daphne had a fair stock of good burning coal stored in the bunker, and buckets were soon filled and passed across

in exchange for several tins from a crate which had broken open during the loading.

—oOo—

Coaling up always left everything and everyone grimed and grey and gritty despite all our precautions to

exclude the all-pervading dust from the cabins and our clothes. We donned button-through overalls, tied them at wrists and ankles, bound up our hair in scarves and kept the cabin doors sealed as tightly as possible by bolting them and pulling the hatch cover over the top during the two hours when the coal was plummeted down the chutes into the holds.

—oOo—

As my concoctions were largely based on vegetables 'acquired' *en route* and tins of bully beef, she was right to refuse my generous helpings; eaten after a hard day's work, the results were noisy rather than nourishing!

—oOo—

I remembered Peggy and her outrage at such maltreatment of her muscles and stamina. Bloody gates, bloody paddles, I murmured in sympathy as I slid off the beam to lie exhausted and wretched on the wet grass. What a birthday!

—oOo—

*cont'd ...*

Diary Note.

The ice has kept us for a whole week tied near the *Blue Lias*, the only sign of habitation. For the first two days we were so exhausted that we just stayed in bed and slept. We had wonderful ideas about getting all the odd jobs done but it's surprising how few have been accomplished. Each morning the ice around the boats has to be broken to keep the boats afloat. The shafts are as cold as ever!

—oOo—

The bucket was our only form of lavatory and it was kept in the engine-room and used there; it was also used for baling the bilges, swabbing down and emptying the old oil after an oil change! I remember a good laugh on a later trip at the vision of an oily ring on Susan's bottom on one of our infrequent strip-down washes; upon inspection, mine too carried the mark! The bucket-and-chuck-it method of disposal was used by all boaters and trainees although the over-the-side was so discreetly performed that only once was I caught in the act.

—oOo—

It wasn't until years later, when questions arose about pension contributions, that I was envious of my more provident friends who had joined the recognized forces and whose pension rights had been safeguarded during their period of service. Was the experience of working on the boats worth the financial forfeiture? (*Nor did the "Idle Women" ever get the extra rations and clothing coupons enjoyed by servicewomen and members of The Womens' Land Army. Consequently they used seedy shops in Limehouse, where sailors' clothes could be acquired "off ration". Ed*)

—oOo—

We cheered on seeing lights blazing everywhere on the boats and in the houses at the Stop (*Hawkesbury. Ed*). For me, by far the best celebration of the peace was at the Stop, where we joined in the festivities on our return from Stratford. After six years of total black-out at the end of each day, the uninhibited flare of light from windows and doorways was the most heart-warming sign of a return to sanity.

—oOo—

It was a luxury also to have my own cabin despite the fact that it was bug-infested. I woke up on the first morning when finally both cabins had been made habitable, with large red lumps all round my hairline.

'Bugs,' said Vi from boats tied near us. 'Wooden boat. Never get rid of them.'

The cabin was sealed and a sulphur candle was kept burning for forty-eight hours. Every night I used to spray the cracks between the boards with DDT. Vi was right: the bugs were discouraged but they never wholly disappeared.

—oOo—

*Nothing changes (1)*

At Watford lock there were the lads waiting for us. They dived off the side just as we were navigating the boats into the lock, while others, still on the bank, shouted. 'Watch out, Missus - man overboard - you've 'it 'im - 'e'll drown,' going through a pantomime of exaggerated gestures to delay our progress and to keep our attention away from working the boats. How well they succeeded.

—oOo—

### *Nothing changes (2)*

We made our way in and out of Brummagem in the early hours to avoid the fun-and-games of the idle young which were rather more unpleasant than the diving games of the youngsters at the Watford lock. Faces would appear over the parapet of a bridge as we approached and we'd take a piece of coal from the heap in readiness on the cabin top. We were entirely vulnerable to their well-directed spumes of spit and even their well-aimed stones. They knew we couldn't get off the boats fast enough to catch them and they had all the unfair advantage of protection from our aims behind the parapet. Some of the boatmen kept catapults at the ready and used them with good effect. In later years we followed their example as the threats from the vantage points on bridges increased rather than diminished.

—oOo—

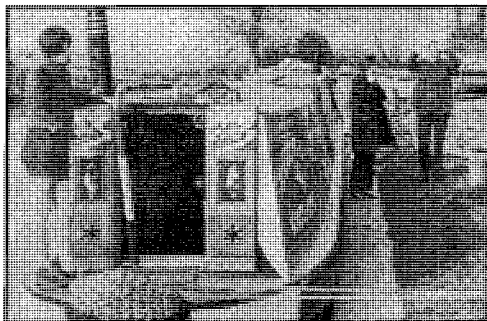
### *Nothing changes (3)*

Through the autumn the towpath was lined for miles with silent and unsmiling anglers. We knew they resented the boats which disturbed the peace of their meditations; the old feud between boatmen and fishermen was all too evident.

—oOo—

And, finally, still very relevant, a note from the chapter 'Thirty Years On'.

Solitary 'singles' and working pairs have become the focus of idle curiosity, anomalies in the crowded scene of the pleasure craft and, as such, are not considered viable as serious commercial enterprises. Yet these pairs keep alive a flickering hope that an enlightened Ministry will again utilize the waterways network before it is irretrievably lost, so that chains



*The author's boat moored at Stowe Hill, where much of the book was written.*

of boats will be used to relieve the pressure on roads and fuel. It is estimated that, under average conditions, a single horse can move two tons on level road, equivalent to ten tons by rail and **eighty** tons by water.

—oOo—

After the war Margaret Cornish returned to teaching, bought a 'noddy' boat in 1978 and toured the hitherto unknown (to her) northern canals. Later she bought and lived on a converted narrowboat (Alphons) where she did most of her writing. Feeling the canals were no longer safe for "an elderly, lone woman like myself" she sold Alphons ("it felt like an act of treason") and went to live in West Cork.

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*The Working Waterway series is published by M & M Baldwin, 24 High Street, Cleobury Mortimer, KIDDERMINSTER DY14 8BY. Tel and Fax: 01299 270110.*

*'Troubled Waters' is £7.50 plus £1.00 post and packing. Credit card orders by 'phone are welcomed.*



# Uppermill - The First Time

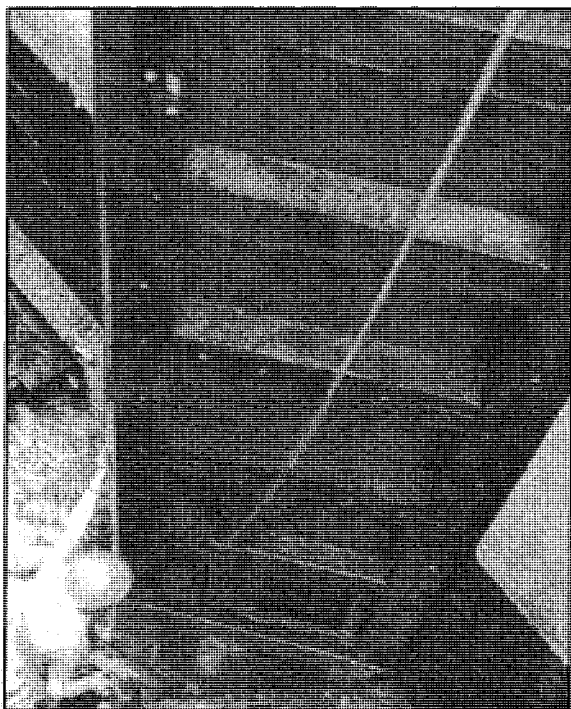
Finding myself out of a job this year, I recklessly offered my services to HCS, and ended up working with the HCS Restoration team on the Uppermill section of the canal. I'd actually worked here before, way back in the early 80's, on the first ever restoration project to be undertaken by HCS. Ken Wright suggested I write something about those early days, so here goes...

It all started back in April 1981. There was no full time staff then, just a bunch of enthusiastic volunteers working at the weekends. The Society did not have the funds it has today (the initial budget was £1000!), so our approach was definitely low-cost and low-tech. What we lacked in equipment we made up for in ingenuity and sheer hard work. The main task was the clearance of two locks for re-gating; the sort of job traditionally done by volunteers at that time.

At this point I'll mention the names of some of those involved, and apologise in advance for those I've missed out! The project leader was Graham Maskell, who was ably assisted by me, and our two young stalwarts from Huddersfield, Dave Irving and Ian Mitchell. Other regulars included Bob Dewey, the former HCS secretary, and Trevor Ellis, the HCS vice-chairman. We also received a lot of support from the North West branch of WRG (Waterway Recovery Group), usually in the form of John Palmer.

Work started at Dungebooth Lock (22W). Like most of the locks on the canal, it had been filled in with stone and capped with concrete. In the past, lock clearance had simply been a case of removing mud and debris from the bottom of the lock. We knew there would be more stuff to

remove this time, just how much more soon became apparent. The concrete capping was removed with pneumatic drills, an arduous task in itself, as the concrete was up to 2 ft thick in places. To remove the infill, all we had were picks, shovels and wheelbarrows, and a simple hoist made out of bits of scaffolding. The latter was soon replaced by a motor-driven barrow hoist, and we later acquired an assortment of pumps for getting the water out of the lock. With such simple tools, progress was painfully slow, and we did consider hiring heavier machinery (cranes, dumpers, JCB's). Unfortunately, the only access to the lock was via the towpath, and it was considered too risky to bring heavy machinery along it. The normal solution to this problem was to build your own road, but this was way beyond our means. So we plodded on, and on, all through the winter, and finally completed the



task in the Spring of 1982. It had been a real test of endurance for the volunteers, and they should be given credit for sticking with us throughout this long job. It's true that a machine could have probably done the job in a week, but this in no way belittles their achievement.

We now turned our attention to Limekiln Lock (23W). To make faster progress, we organised a two-week work camp, in conjunction with WRG. Also, better access allowed us to bring in a crane and two dumpers for the duration of the camp. About 90% of the lock was cleared by the work camp, and the remainder was completed by the end of 1982. All we needed now were some lock gates.

Dave Sumner's employer, Unicom Marine, had kindly offered to sponsor the gates, which were then built by the Rochdale Canal Trust at their own workshops. In the Spring of 1983, the gates were ready, but once again we had the problem of getting access to Dungebooth Lock. The initial plan was to use a JCB to bring the gates across an adjoining field, but this was foiled when we were refused permission to use the old 'iron' bridge over the river. (Now replaced. Ed) The eventual solution was to transport the gates by canal! In fact the gates were simply launched into the canal, with a couple of oil drums tied to the top to keep them afloat. It must have been quite a spectacle for the locals, watching these strange craft being towed up the canal. One brave volunteer even hitched a ride on one of the gates. Installation of the gates followed without too much trouble, and not long after that, the HCS trip boat 'Benjamin Outram' was launched. Since then, there has always been a trip boat operating on this section.

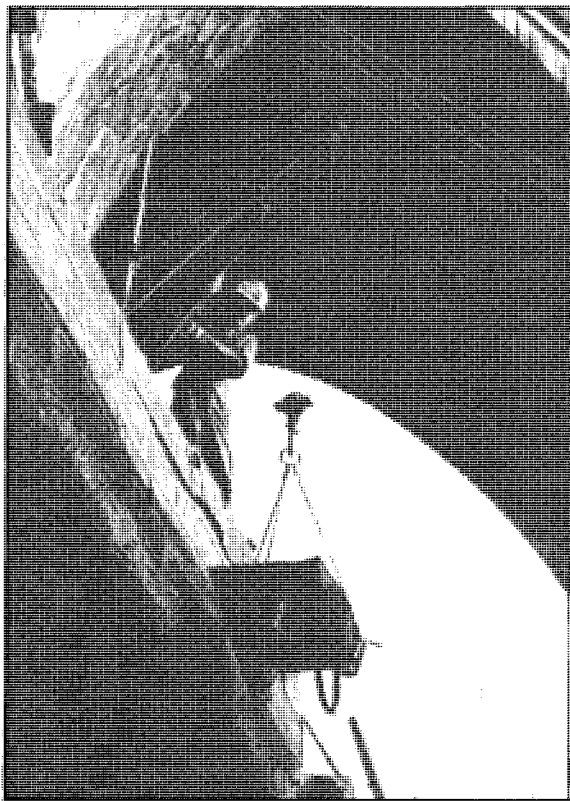
Volunteer restoration work alone would never have restored the canal. It has taken a full time work force and many years of campaigning and negotiation to bring us to the threshold of full restoration. I think the importance of the Uppermill project was that it showed people what could be done and, as a result, they started to believe that full restoration was possible. As John Maynard once put it – "They've stopped asking us why and how we are restoring the canal, and started asking us WHEN".

Laurence Sullivan

*Far Left: The first lock gate goes in. Dungebooth Lock, Spring 1983.*

*Left: Bob Dewey on the barrow hoist. Limekiln Lock, Winter 1982.*

*Photos: L. Sullivan*



# Standedge Tunnel - II

*Following the article in the last issue of Pennine Link, criticising British Waterways for not responding to a long letter from Keith Noble about the operation of Standedge Tunnel, I am now happy to reproduce BW's reply. This is dated 10<sup>th</sup> May although we did not receive a copy until well after the deadline for Plink 129, mainly because its recipient was spending a lot of time on his boat and/or your editor was enjoying a spell in Greece!*

*From Colin Thompson, Project Engineer, BW, Marsden:*

## **Huddersfield Narrow Canal Restoration Proposed Operation of Standedge Tunnel upon Restoration**

I am sorry for the delay in writing this letter, but as I am sure you know the last couple of months have been very hectic as we have been entering into funding agreements and starting to let contracts.

The proposals put forward for opening the tunnel have been reached following consultations with several organisations and with British Waterways staff who have wide experience of tunnel operations and safety management.

It is true that while we have not yet officially approached the Health and Safety Executive or Maritime and Coastguard Agency (who will be responsible for licensing any method of operation that involves trip boats) informal conversations have been held and the two agencies views are that British Waterways should propose a method to operate the tunnel which would then be put to the Health and Safety Executive and Maritime and Coastguard Agency for comment and approval. We intend to propose a method which will be acceptable.

You say that by operating a system which allows only 8 boats through the tunnel each way each day will put constraints on people because of the need to be at a certain place at a certain time. This already happens on canals, you need to be at a destination, whether a home base or home mooring at a certain time and forward planning is required to ensure this happens, so what will be needed on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is not greatly different to requirements when cruising elsewhere.

We are aware that at certain peak periods there may be a need to increase the number of boats allowed to pass through the tunnel and steps have been taken in the planning to allow this to happen.

In Harecastle Tunnel which you mention there is a limit of 8 boats allowed through in each convoy and during summer periods boats must arrive by 4.00pm to be sure of passage and the tunnel closes at 6.00pm so even here passage is restricted.

There are 3 main reasons why boaters will not be allowed to stay on their own boats for the duration of the trip. These are:

1. Railtrack have stated that we must take steps to ensure the people using the tunnel do not trespass into their tunnels, via the adits. British Waterways will not be able to do this if people remain on their own boats.
2. We must ensure that engines, stoves, fires etc. are not started up during the trip. Again the only way to ensure this does not happen is to take everyone off their boat.
3. In the event of an emergency the safest way to ensure everybody is evacuated in the most appropriate way is to have them in one place under the supervision of a trained operator.

*continued opposite*

# Sue Achieves an Ambition - Ten Years Late

**H**CS member, boating enthusiast and hard worker for both the Tameside and Saddleworth Festival Committees, Sue Ruffley, has achieved an ambition.

She becomes the fourth HCS member of the so-called "weaker sex" to pass the tough examinations leading to the award of a boatmaster's certificate, and Sue, of Middle Green, Ashton, admitted that she was late in qualifying for the award - about ten years in fact.

She first decided to go for it ten years ago following the awful tragedy on the Thames in London, when the Marchionness pleasure boat sank, after colliding with another craft. At the time Sue's daughter, Karen, then sixteen, was modelling in London and with a friend was due to join a party on the Marchionness on the very night that the ill-fated boat sank.

"She rang to tell us that she had been invited to the party and was very excited about it. But it was pointed out to her by her father that she had promised to come home - and at the last minute she changed her plans and travelled North. Two of her friends died when the Marchionness sank," said Sue.

"It was a terrible shock and it prompted me to think very seriously about getting my boatmaster's certificate. And it was mentioned to me by Bob Maycock, when I started helping with the HCS boats at week-ends. It was something I really enjoyed and more recently I decided I had to take the plunge and study for the examinations plus the practical tests. I've been messing about in boats, mainly hire craft, for about twenty-five years and it's something I love," said Sue.

Her family has strong connections with canals and boating. Father Frank, of course, is a veteran and highly respected worker for the restoration cause, including service on HCS Restoration, brother Pete is already certificated and Sue joins other female HCS members, Christine Johnston and Janet Wilson and daughter Julie, in being qualified to take charge of passenger carrying boats on the country's England Waterways.

"It's an ambition achieved - although I must admit it's later than I planned," added Sue.

Alec Ramsden.

---

You are right in saying that British Waterways commissioned a study into the ventilation conditions within the tunnel and whilst I would not normally provide copies of the report to outside organisations I am willing to let your society have a copy. You will see from it why the report recommends that the use of combustion engined boats are banned within the tunnel.

All jagged edges of rock which may cause damage to boats are to be removed during the contract and fendering is to be fitted to ensure the convoy keeps to a straight line.

As you say in the penultimate paragraph everything should and will be done to encourage the use of the canal and

Standedge Tunnel, but we will obviously not prejudice the safety of canal users in order to achieve this.

I hope the above answers the points you raised, but if not please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Tom Rowe, alternatively, we could discuss it further at the next user group meeting.

Colin Thompson  
Project Engineer

*BW's response raises several new issues even without the benefit of seeing a copy of the tunnel study. There should be plenty to discuss at the next User Group meeting! Ed.*

# 1999 Photographic Competition

**AUTUMN'S HERE  
WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE  
CAPTURE SOME ON FILM  
SEND THEM TO PENNINE LINK!**

OR, IF YOU AREN'T NEAR WATER, SEND A FEW FROM YESTERYEAR - NO DATE BARRIER THIS YEAR. NO COUNTRY BARRIER, EITHER!

Yes, the rules have changed again, just to keep you on your toes. Any photographs, from any year, can be entered within the four categories, and from any waterway, worldwide, in categories c) and d).

## RULES

- \* Prints only, black & white or colour - winning entries will be published in Pennine Link in black and white.
- \* Minimum size 6" x 4", maximum 8" x 6"
- \* Any canal-related subject is acceptable in the following categories:-
  - a) Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Senior
  - b) Huddersfield Narrow Canal - Junior (16 or under)
  - c) Other waterways - Senior
  - d) Other waterways - Junior (16 or under)
- \* Open only to bona fide members of HCS and their immediate families.
- \* Entry fee of 50p per print.
- \* Postage required for return of prints.

## HOW TO ENTER

1. Send your prints (maximum 5 per person in each category) to:-

PHOTO COMPETITION  
HUDDERSFIELD CANAL SOCIETY  
239 MOSSLEY ROAD  
ASHTON-U-LYNE OL6 6LN
2. Include details of the photographs (captions if you so wish) and age of the photographer if 16 or under.
3. Include your name and address and the name of the HCS member you are related to.
4. Include return postage if you want your prints back.

5. Include P.O. or cheque (payable to HCS) totalling 50p for each print submitted.
6. CLOSING DATE has been extended to:  
**FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 1999.**

## PRIZES

The judge will again be Geoffrey Hope, Past President of Oldham Photographic Society who will write a critical comment for each print submitted.

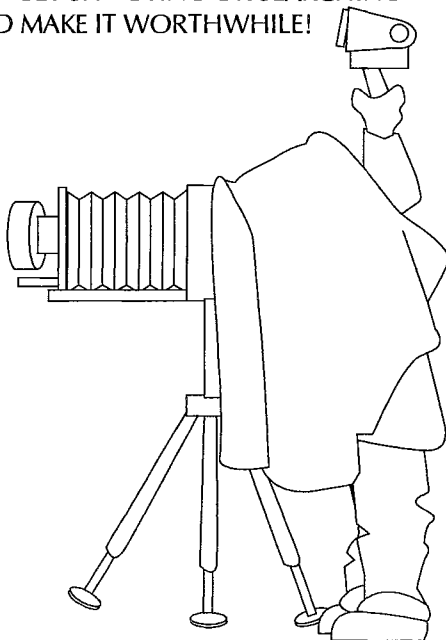
There will be a winner and a runner-up in each of the four categories a) to d) and each will receive a certificate and a cash prize.

The overall winner will receive the Pennine Link Challenge shield for one year, a replica to keep, a waterways book and a signed certificate.

All winning prints will be published in Pennine Link, with the judge's comments.

Any queries to The Editor, Ken Wright  
Tel. 01457 873599

THE VALUE OF THE PRIZES WILL  
DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES  
SO - GET SHOOTING OR SEARCHING -  
AND MAKE IT WORTHWHILE!



# Wooden Canal Boat Society

The above society is local to our Canal, having its base on the Ashton Canal, only a few hundred yards from Lock 1W on the Huddersfield Narrow. They are looking for support in their aim to restore "Hazel" to her pristine glory.

"Hazel" was built in 1914 at Runcorn to carry coal, salt and chemicals on the Trent and Mersey and Bridgewater Canals. Her name was "Mull", named after the Scottish island. She was a type of narrow boat, once common in the area, known as Wooden Headers. She was horse-drawn and could carry a good 30 tons on the deep waterways.

In 1929 Agnes Beech bought the boat and renamed her Hazel after one of her daughters. Mrs. Beech was a No.1 (owner/boatwoman) who carried coal in the Leigh and Northwich areas.

When this trade finished 'Hazel' was used as a crude passenger boat for some years then in

1951 was fitted with a petrol engine and converted into a luxury home by a Mr. & Mrs. Dean. She attended many early waterway rallies and between the 60s and 80s was a comfortable home to several families.

Sadly, Hazel is now in need of extensive renovation work. If you would like to help in the work by making a donation, sponsoring 'Hazel' for a day or helping to run the WCBS **telephone 0161 330 2315**.

And 'Hazel' is not destined for a museum. She will return to work providing holidays for people who are recovering from depression and other stress-related health problems. The 1951 accommodation will be retained and brought up to modern standards with disabled access.

**HELP A GOOD CAUSE FOR A GOOD CAUSE!**

*Hazel on the Ashton Canal  
Photo: Shirley Rowbottom*

Ken Wright





# Canal Words

*After a slight hiccup caused by too much material last time we conclude our series of canal vernacular (Keith Noble reminds me that 'rimers', mentioned in Pennine Link 128 are still in use on some Thames weirs - clever devil!)*

**SILL** (and cill) - beam on the floor of a lock against which the lock gate seals.

**SLUB** - dredged mud.

**SNUBBER** - 75 foot long rope connecting loaded 'motor' and 'butty'.

**SOSS** - in eastern England a sluice.

**STANDS** - supports for a gang plank other than the bank and the boat.

**STANK** - a temporary dam in a canal for maintenance purposes.

**STEAMING** - planks were placed in a sealed oven where steam was applied. This made the planks pliable so they could be worked to the shape of a boats bow.

**STOWER CLOGS** - on Yorkshire boats the shaped timbers on the hatch covers in which poles and shafts lay.

**STUD** - usually T shaped metal bracket at the bows for attaching mooring or tow ropes.

**TIDY BETTY** - on larger Yorkshire boats a wooden or iron block with a handle (picture a table tennis bat) onto which a kettle or pan could be placed immediately after its removal from the stove.

**TRENAIL** - an oak peg used to fix timber joints before metal fixings became available.

**TYING POINT** - nothing to do with ropes but the shallowest part of a navigation - if a boat could pass the tying point it could reach anywhere beyond.

**WIND** - not a painful condition but merely the act of turning a boat i.e. winding hole - turning place. Pronounced as *winned*.

**WINGS** - temporary wooden side extensions to a boat on which a pair of boatmen would lie to 'leg' through tunnels.

**WOOSER** - South Midlands term for a narrow boat. Derivation - Worcester.

*I understand that John Harwood is coming up with another list for the future! Ed.*



# Canal Chronology

*Courtesy of the Colne Valley Express and Chronicle here is a timely reminder of the history of OUR canal and events leading up to the restoration to through navigation.*

**1794** Act of Parliament passed and the construction work on the canal started

**1797-98** The canal is opened for traffic from Huddersfield and Ashton up to the Standedge Tunnel

**1811** Standedge Tunnel opened allowing navigation along its 20 mile length

**1845** Canal incorporated into the newly formed railway company

**1847-1910** Rapid rail expansion - three new Standedge Tunnels constructed. Steady decline of canal traffic

**1921** Last commercial boat through Standedge tunnel

**1944** Canal closed by Act of Parliament and abandoned

**1968** Canal given Remainder Waterway status - maintained only to supply water

**1974** Huddersfield Canal Society formed to restore full navigation - once dubbed 'The Impossible Restoration'

**1983** First section of canal restored to full navigation in Uppermill

**1985** Huddersfield Narrow Canal Joint Committee formed - comprising HCS, Kirklees, Oldham and Tameside Councils and British Waterways

**1980/1990s** Steady progress on restoring sections of canal. 63 locks restored, eight bridges rebuilt and three quarters of the canal navigable (*Youth Employment and other Government employment schemes were vital to this successful period. Ed*)

**1996** Substantial grants awarded by the Millennium Commission and English Partnerships to complete the last 20 remaining obstructions - costing £30m

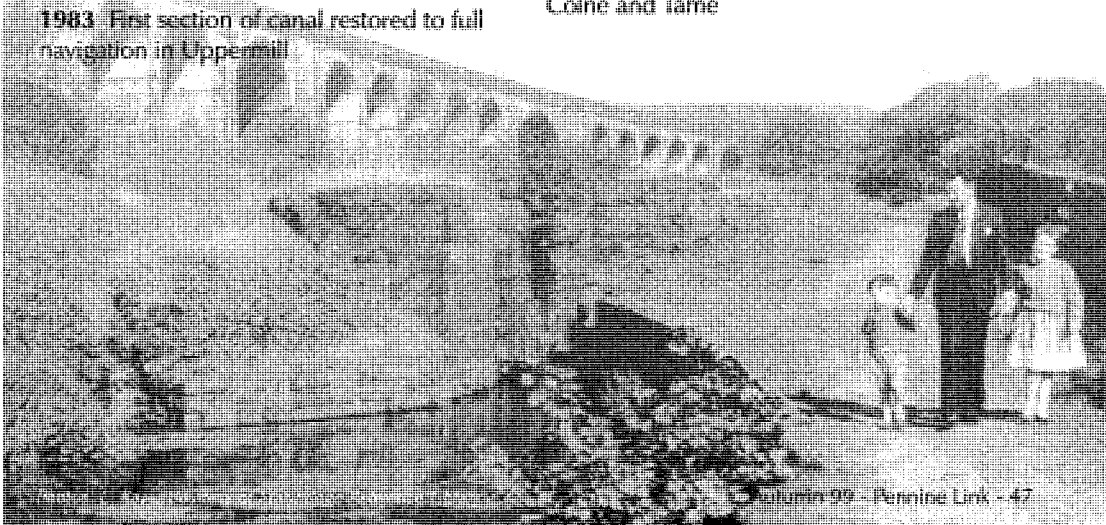
**1997** Huddersfield Canal Company formed to complete the restoration by 2001

**74 lock chambers** - 32 on the West side and 42 on the East side - raise the canal to 645 feet above sea level

**Two tunnels** - Standedge is 3.25 miles long, took 16 years to build and claimed the lives of many navvies. Scout is 220 yards and has a towing path

**Ten reservoirs** originally supplied the canal with 340m gallons of water. Since the canal closure most are designated for domestic use

**Five aqueducts** take the canal over the rivers Colne and Tame



# Mikron - Autumn Tour 1999

Following their 28th tour of the inland waterways this summer, Mikron swap narrowboat *Tyseley* for their van and travel to pubs, museums, community centres, etc., in their 18th Autumn Tour.

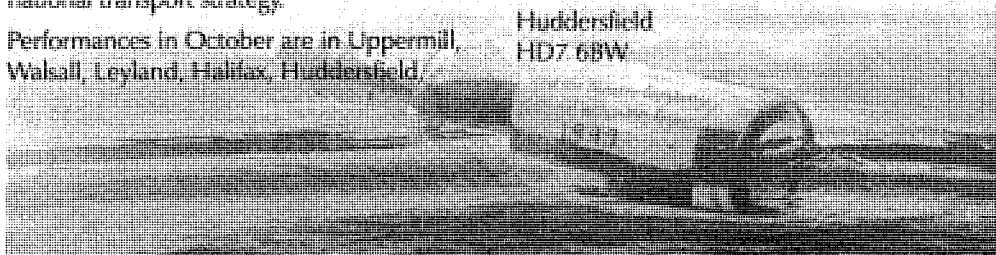
The presentation will again be a single play, *Just in Time*, about hitch-hiker Alison who stumbles into an unknown world whose mysteries are gradually revealed to her. The sub-plot is the topical subject of the national transport strategy.

Performances in October are in Uppermill, Walsall, Leyland, Halifax, Huddersfield.

Dobcross, Ripponden, Ilkley, Carleton, Northallerton, Jackson Bridge, Wetherby, Wakefield, Sowerby Bridge, Leeds, Elland, Ossett, Pontefract and Bollington!

For full details send an s.a.e. to

Mikron Theatre  
Marsden Mechanics  
Peel Street  
Marsden  
Huddersfield  
HD7 6BW



## The Boat Museum - Family Events

For a wonderful day out, why not visit the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port. And there are special Family events planned for November:

**6th & 7th - Roses and Castles** weekend painting course (pre-booking essential)

**27th & 28th - Grand Christmas Fair**

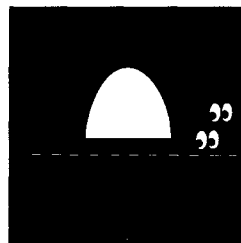
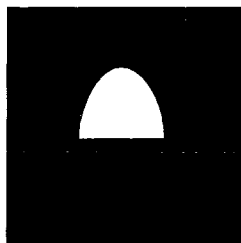
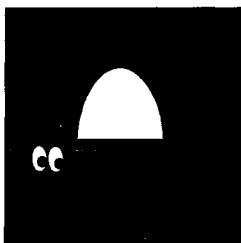
- \* Hand Crafted Goods
- \* See Santa in his Narrowboat Grotto

For full details of these, and our full programme of family events, please contact Janet Casement on 0151 355 5017.

The Boat Museum  
Ellesmere Port  
Cheshire

Off Junction 9, M53

In Standedge Tunnel ...



Is anybody there? ...

Only us chickens...

# What the Papers Say

*Quite a good bunch this time and generally in a positive mood! And some contributions from the East side (thanks to member Keith W. Sykes) and also from nationals and free papers.*

## **May 14<sup>th</sup> Colne Valley Chronicle**

Report on success of Mikron Theatre's appeal for funds for repairs to narrowboat Tyseley. £45,000 raised by public donation allows the summer tour cruise to go ahead.

## **May 19<sup>th</sup> Huddersfield Daily Examiner**

Similar report with a near full page feature story on the Mikron team and its endeavours. (See separate report on Autumn tour).

## **May 20<sup>th</sup> Huddersfield Daily Examiner**

Large article headed "£5M tunnel plan begins - Masterpiece of engineering about to get a new lease of life". Details the start of work on Standedge Tunnel and predicting "exciting times for Marsden."

## **May 21<sup>st</sup> Colne Valley Chronicle**

"Impossible Dream" coming true. Full page feature including the Pennine Link centre-spread progress map. Sub-heading "All our local businesses are watching this space - including the sceptics".

Another full page of photographs and the "Express and Chronicle Factbox - The Canal Chronology" which is repeated elsewhere.

## **June 7<sup>th</sup> Oldham Evening Chronicle**

A letter to the editor from Ted Lord, well-known local councillor:-

"I am concerned at the lack of published information about the procedures to be adopted in emergencies during the proposed closure of Oldham Road, Uppermill.

That access to Uppermill, Diggle, Dobcross and surrounding areas will be extremely difficult via Arthurs Lane/Carr Lane or Queensway/Carr Lane is surely not in dispute, and I would suggest the need for a clearly-published and effective procedure is mandatory.

One measure which would alleviate the problem posed to some extent would be to station a fire engine and ambulance, with crews, at the Uppermill police station, manned on a 24-hour basis during the closures, with promulgated contact phone number and/or link to the 999 service.

The cost of such a measure would be minimal compared with the amount being spent by the local authority anyway!

Perhaps the officials involved would comment on both the above observations."

Ted Lord, Arthurs Lane, Greenfield.

*(They didn't. Ed.)*

## **June 10<sup>th</sup> Oldham Evening Chronicle**

Residents opt for a Bailey bridge. 35% response to local consultation of whom 83% opted for the only realistic option - a single lane Bailey bridge - during work on Uppermill High St./Wade Lock. Councillor Ian McInnes did not agree with the findings as they were not totally representative of all Saddleworth.

## **June 10<sup>th</sup> Oldham Advertiser**

Cash help as canal plan hits new hitch. Report on the Rochdale, cash problems and the continuing problem with the United Norwest Co-operative Limited store in Failsworth.

## **June 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday Express.**

Nice, positive, piece about the future of Britain's inland waterways and BW's membership scheme proposals.

*cont'd ...*

### **June 17<sup>th</sup> Oldham Evening Chronicle**

British Waterways advertise for one stonemason and three waterway operatives. (*In the end our men got two of the four posts*).

### **June 18<sup>th</sup> Oldham Evening Chronicle**

Work on canal set to start.

Work to remove one of the two main blockages to a navigable Huddersfield Canal through Saddleworth will begin next month.

Local firm DCT Civil Engineering will undertake the £750,000 contract to unblock the historic canal where it crosses Wool Road at Dobcross. It is likely to take nine months.

Oldham's Director of Technical Services, Philip Barrett, said: "This will be one of the more complex engineering tasks of the ambitious restoration scheme for the 20-mile long canal, but the economic and environmental benefits for the local area are considerable."

The work involves building a reinforced stone-clad culvert to carry the canal under the road, and allow boats to pass through.

The adjacent lock will be restored, and a previously buried masonry arch bridge is to be refurbished.

### **June 25<sup>th</sup> Oldham Evening Chronicle**

Canal group's vital role. Society's pledge "We won't disappear". Report of our AGM.

### **June 25<sup>th</sup> Oldham Advertiser**

Report on start of work at Wool Road.

### **July 20<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Oldham Evening Chronicle COMMENT**

#### **CANAL WORK**

Uppermill is bracing itself for the start of the work to restore the route of the Huddersfield Canal beneath High Street. The first part of

the contract, lasting six weeks, is to move gas pipes to make way for the main contract which starts next year.

There is a promise that festivals and weekend events will not be affected, but that will be of little consolation to people who live and work in Uppermill seven days a week.

### **July 20<sup>th</sup> Oldham Evening Chronicle**

Canal reopens ready for summer sailings. Story about the completion of Lime Kiln Lock and the re-introduction of the full round trip by *Pennine Moonraker*. Tom Rowe, senior project manager for BW is reported as saying "We are delighted that the canal has been re-opened at Uppermill in time for the summer. The works have been carried out to a high standard, maintaining the heritage of the waterway for the enjoyment of the growing number of people who visit it."

*A tribute to the work of HCS-R. Ed.*

### **July 23<sup>rd</sup> Oldham Evening Chronicle**

A surprisingly good photograph of yours truly (*I am not one bit photogenic!*) posing with film-maker Ken Stephinson from Stephinson Television at the start of filming for the canal restoration archive video.

Ken is looking for information, films, photos, stories - anything, about the canal in the past, to help in his work. If you can provide anything please contact him on 01457 820820.

*And, finally,*

### **July 23<sup>rd</sup> Oldham Evening Chronicle**

Dredger work on canal is finished. A very sad photograph of our dredger being lifted out of the water at Uppermill after completion of its last contract for HCS-R.

Ken Wright

# Letters to the Editor

*A really poor effort this time! Quantity, not quality, I mean. Having had several 'phone calls about controversial issues in Plink 129, mainly Standedge Tunnel, environmental issues and job losses, I expected quite a few letters on those subjects. But there was only one, from old faithful John Harwood. And a letter from Keith Noble which I would have thought was a spoof if I didn't know him better!*

Dear Ken,

I'm afraid that the letter reproduced from the Oldham Evening Chronicle in Plink 129 is one of those that hits one of my (few) explosion buttons and sends me rushing to the keyboard. Neither I nor anybody else associated or supportive of canal restoration wishes ill upon any form of wildlife, I am sure, but some of the correspondents on the subject go (in my opinion) way over the top and are very selective in their choice of subjects.

First, the assumption that HNC is blasting a way across the Pennines with total disregard for all nature considerations is (besides being untrue) offensive.

Secondly, the fact that fresh water crayfish and snails are found is primarily a compliment to those in charge of water quality but is also quoted as a fact, with no evidence whatever offered.

Let us make a move towards getting things in perspective. Three times a week I drive past the East Midlands Airport where many acres of ground are being dug up and built on. The same is happening at Manchester Airport for the second runway.

Regarding Manchester, Swampy and friends have made some protest; at East Midlands - none. Swampy appears at the Newbury bypass as well but where are all the more

serious (?) naturalists at these times? East Midlands alone is probably causing more environmental disruption than all canal restoration projects put together!

A canal environment once restored is one of the most wildlife friendly environments we have - indeed where would the crayfish and snails be if the canal had not been built in the first place? Why does the most environmentally unfriendly form of transport (namely aircraft) attract no comment whatever, both on the building of more ground facilities and on the fuel guzzling planes? Why is John Prescott silent on the issue of flying?

If boats, tunnels and bats are so incompatible why has BW been installing bat bricks in the tunnels of the northern Trent and Mersey - because boats and bats do get on, that's why. Why no issues of bats in road and railway tunnels - it couldn't be that ardent environmentalists don't drive cars, ride on buses or trains or fly could it?

As I say there is no way I am anti-wildlife but put canal restoration into proportion with all the other activities of man going on and it is not only miniscule but in the long term beneficial to wildlife. Here I end before I get more angry.

Regards,

John Harwood, Hope Valley.

*From the Calder Navigation Society.*

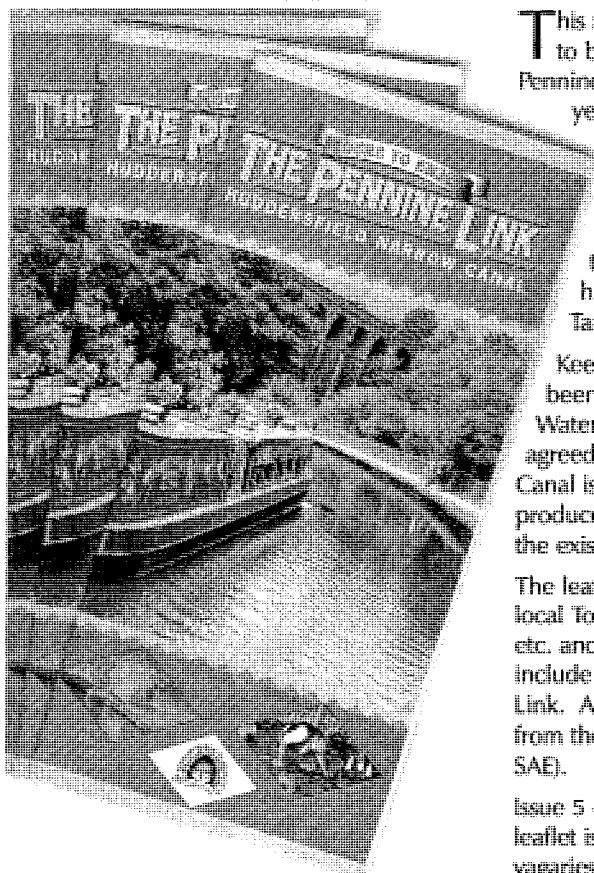
Dear Ken,

## **Curry on Canals**

Our Society has compiled a list of curry restaurants and takeaways close enough to canals to be of use to boaters. 'Close' is near enough for delivery, say three miles, if there is nowhere more convenient. However we recognise that the list is incomplete and



# The Pennine Link



This full colour, glossy leaflet is the second to be published under the title 'The Pennine Link', the first being issued some years ago by the HNC Joint Committee.

The Huddersfield Canal Company, of which the Canal Society is one of the partners, has taken the initiative this time with the aims of marketing the Canal from end to end and highlighting the varied attractions in the Tame and Colne valleys.

Keen observers of style will notice it has been designed in line with British Waterways corporate image. This was agreed by the partners so that once the Canal is opened, BW can easily continue to produce leaflets on the Narrow by modifying the existing layout.

The leaflets are available free of charge at all local Tourist Information Centres, Libraries, etc. and the Society is pleased to be able to include a copy with this Issue of Pennine Link. An additional copy can be obtained from the Society offices (please enclose a 19p SAE).

Issue 5 of the Canal Company's progress leaflet is also published and thanks to the vagaries of postal weight bands, we can include a copy as well!

would be grateful for any further information which might fill in any gaps.

Please would you ask your readers to let me have details of any curry establishment which would appear to be of use to boaters. My address is The Dene, Triangle, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire HX6 3EA or, by E-mail. All I need is a name, address and telephone number and the best way to give this information is, perhaps, to send a copy of the takeaway menu.

Contributors whose suggestions are incorporated will receive a copy of the list

but otherwise proceeds from sales will go to the Society's funds.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Noble, Honorary Secretary.

E-mail: [noble@thedene.triangle-freeserve.co.uk](mailto:noble@thedene.triangle-freeserve.co.uk)

*I did enquire whether Chinese take-aways should be included - especially if they sold Chinese curries - but apparently not! There are so many of them that they could well be the subject of a later survey. A job for the future of HCS, perhaps? Ed.*

# The Tom Rolt Award

EVENING CHRONICLE, OLDHAM, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1999 ----- 27

## Canal group's magazine is best in UK



**EDITOR Ken Wright (left) and assistant Bob Gough, winners of the Inland Waterways Association 1999 Tom Rolt Award for the Pennine Link magazine**

THE Huddersfield Canal Society's magazine, Pennine Link, has been named the best periodical produced by a voluntary waterways organisation.

Plink, as it is affectionately known by its members, has gone one better than last year, when it was one of two magazines to share top spot.

News of Plink's success, announced at the Inland Waterways' Association annual festival, has been greeted with delight by editor Ken Wright, of Dobcross.

Plink first carried off the award for the best periodical in 1984 under the editorship of housewife, Sue Gibson.

Successive editors have turned it from a simple, duplicated news sheet into a first class periodical, packed with facts and figures about the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the restoration campaign, plus

other waterways news, features, a lively letters page, hard-hitting editorials and competitions.

Editors have constantly sought to up-date and improve the magazine and vital to this has been assistant editor Bob Gough, who is the technical expert, responsible for design, layout and typesetting.

"With our new computer software and Bob's skills we can now produce really professional results, which are the envy of many other societies," said Mr Wright.

In addition to improvements in quality, the size of the magazine has increased. When Mr Wright took over as editor there were 44 pages - the last edition had 56, and he had to reject articles.

"We realised we could not rest on our laurels," he said. "We are delighted to be on top on our own this time."

*Photo & Article courtesy of Oldham Evening Chronicle*

# The Waterways Code

British Waterways have issued a new (June 1998) Waterways Code in "folded A5" format. In semi-gloss bright orange with black and white text and stylised graphics it is a very attractive document. In this final excerpt we deal with boaters, cyclists and unpowered craft.

## BOATERS

### Look after your waterways

Avoid creating a breaking wash and don't run your propeller while moored.

### Consider others

Take care to position mooring pins and ropes so they are not a danger to towpath users - if possible make them conspicuous with a marker or cover.

Don't obstruct locks, bridges, water points or turning points.

When passing anglers, unless they politely request otherwise, keep to the centre of the channel, reduce your wash but maintain a steady pace.

Slow down when passing moored or unpowered boats.

Pay heed to local signs concerning fishing matches.

### Take care

You and your crew must understand how to operate your boat and navigate locks, bridges and tunnels. See our special Code for Boaters.

Children and non swimmers should wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid.

## CYCLISTS

### Look after your waterways

Avoid cycling where your tyres would damage the path or verges (eg when they are wet or soft).

### Consider others

Give way to others on the towpath and warn them of your approach. A polite 'hello' and 'thank you' mean a lot.

Dismount under low or blind bridges.

Never race one another or perform speed trials.

We recommend you obtain third party liability insurance and equip your bike with a bell or equivalent.

### Take care

Access paths can be steep and slippery. Join or leave the towpath with care.

You must get off and push your cycle beneath low or blind bridges, and where the path is very narrow.

Take special care if cycling at night. Use front and rear lights.

Thorny hedge trimmings can cause a puncture. We recommend plastic-reinforced tyres.

## UNPOWERED CRAFT

### Consider others

When passing anglers, unless they politely request otherwise, follow a straight course in single file.

Don't perform speed events without permission from the waterway manager.

### Take care

Make sure your craft is suitable for the waterway you are using and you are competent to use it.

Larger craft need deeper water and room to manoeuvre so keep to the side of the channel where the helmsman can see you.

Check the local waterway safety regulations before you set out. Unpowered craft are not permitted through many tunnels or on parts of some larger river navigations.

If you are permitted to use a tunnel, carry a light and whistle to warn other craft of your presence. Travel through in groups of at least three.

Wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid while afloat.

Locks, weirs and sluices are dangerous. Don't stay aboard your craft in a filling or emptying lock - carry it around, or if it is too heavy, use lines to keep control.

### Published by:-

British Waterways Customer Services,  
Willow Grange,  
Church Road,  
WATFORD WD1 3QA.

Tel: 01923 201120 Fax: 01923 201300

E-mail: [info@canalshq.demon.co.uk](mailto:info@canalshq.demon.co.uk)

Website: [www.britishwaterways.co.uk](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk)

# The Back Page

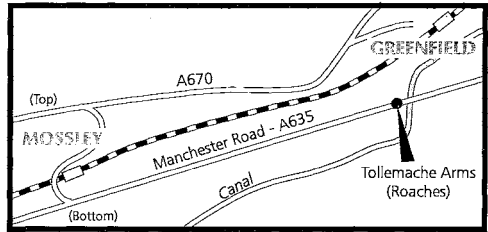
## THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

- 2526 Mr & Mrs Harrison & Family,
- 2527 Mr Hartley-Smith,
- 2528 Mr Inman,
- 2529 Mrs Clements,
- 2530 Mr Deakin,
- 2531 Mr Bezer,
- 2532 Mr Hynes,
- 2533 Mr Glock,
- 2534 Mr Anderson,
- 2535 Mr & Mrs Gilbert,
- 2536 Mr & Mrs Woodhead,
- 2537 Mr Urmson,

### SOCIAL MEETINGS:

As usual, the venue is the 'Tollemache Arms', Manchester Road, Mossley (Roaches) on the second Wednesday of the month commencing at 8.00pm. Forthcoming meetings are:

- 10th November, 8th December,
- 12th January 2000.



### PENNINE LINK ARCHIVE:

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